

Where life happens

Proximity, everyday life strategies,
and gender in the dense city

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Abstract

This thesis is about the everyday life in the dense city, and gendered aspects of the everyday. Drawing on the fact that many cities densify in order to increase sustainability, and that gender differences in terms of mobility exist, this thesis takes an interest in how the everyday is achieved while living in the dense city applying theories of gender and time geography. This is done by studying one densified area in Gothenburg called Kvillebäcken, using time diaries in combination with interviews with residents living in the area.

In terms of accessibility, the findings illustrate three strategies used while living in the dense city: strategy of the near, strategy of the near through digital options and strategy of the not-so-near. While an individual makes use of a combination of these strategies in order to perform everyday activities, the results illustrate that the strategy of the near stands out as a main strategy. Further, the strategy of the near through digital options is found to be a proximity strategy, supporting the strategy of the near. This study also shows that the move to a dense area encourages a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport, where the move eases an already existing sustainable modal choice or supports such a shift. The use of these transport modes tends to maintain over time.

In addition, this study shows that gender structures are partly dissolved in the dense city. In the dense city, modal choice becomes a less gendered issue where men embrace women's pattern of proximity and also, women and men share household responsibilities more equally. The dense city is a city more on women's terms. Even if gender differences still remain in some respects, and some take new forms, the dense city supports gender equality.

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1. Introduction

Mobility is at the core of societies today. Throughout history and development, the daily mobility has increased. As there has been a shift towards faster transport modes (e.g., the car), people reach further distances and larger span of activity spaces (Banister, 2011; Frändberg & Vilhelmson, 2014). Such an increase in the daily mobility has, in the Swedish context, led to a development where the everyday spaces that can be reached, have moved from a local to a regional scale (Haugen, 2012). Such mobility trends have been built into the urban land-use, i.e., fostering an urban sprawl (Frändberg & Vilhelmson, 2014; Qviström, 2015). Due to a growing distance between amenities, accessibility has come to depend more on the ability to move between different amenities, i.e., mobility (Hanson, 2004). The relationship between mobility and land-use goes in two directions: when amenities are spatially separated, mobility-dependency increases (a short-term influence) – and high mobility can lead to a sustained separation of amenities (a long-term influence) (ibid.). This means that the placement of amenities continuously depends upon high mobility in order to be reached.

The focus to constantly increase mobility and thus distances travelled, and its effect on urban land-use, is often pointed out as an unsustainable urban form (Hanson, 2004; Haugen, 2012). In order for transport to become more sustainable, Banister (2011) argues for the need of slower transport modes and thus travelling shorter distances. In order for such development to take place, Banister (2011) argues that land-use planning can encourage such a shift through localizing activities close, in order to reduce distances travelled (i.e., proximity). Through putting focus on proximity, as opposed to mobility, when, for example, localizing a new activity or amenity, transport modes other than the car are encouraged.

In order to encourage a development towards proximity, the process of densification has become a dominant strategy within city planning (The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, 2016). However, less is known whether residents in a city make use of the “close alternative” and how. The city is the setting in which the inhabitants carry out their everyday lives and activities. The opportunities and constraints to make the everyday life feasible are connected to the localization of services, activities, housing and the transport network within the city. The everyday life is, on the one hand, individual, such as which activities one *wants to* and *needs to* perform. On the other hand, the everyday life is formed by structures, such as which activities one *can* perform (given the resources that the

individual has access to). The everyday life is thus formed by which possibilities that the city structure offers (Jarvis, 2005). Moreover, the everyday life is affected by social structures, such as gender, where earlier research shows differences between women and men. Combining individual aspects, spatial and social structures, the individual performs certain activities in the everyday, and forms an everyday *strategy*.

Previous research has shown that women and men do not have equal accessibility to the infrastructure, accessibility to localization patterns and mobility resources, which is connected to aspects of gender (Law, 1999; Polk, 2004). This can be seen through women's shorter commuting distances or men's privilege to public space through a higher access to the car compared to women (Gil Solá, 2013; Kronsell et al., 2016). Consequently, women make use of less space than do men and slower transport modes. This raises the issue whether the dense city has an effect on such differences and typical patterns. As cities are densifying, and accessibility is increased through proximity, women and men may face a spatial structure that could benefit them more equally. Thus, the process of densification may alter existing gender differences in terms of accessibility and mobility. They may take different forms, or even be loosened up and support gender equality¹. This means that the dense city may support social sustainability in addition to ecological sustainability.

To sum up, little is known regarding the local life in densified city areas and whether people actually make use of the benefits that the dense city creates and in what ways. There is also a lack of knowledge of what factors facilitate or hinder the individual to live a local sustainable life and if these are gendered. One city, with a pronounced strategy to densify through encouraging the usage of proximity and/or slow modes, is Gothenburg. Through creating a (more) compact urban area, to blend residents with workers and visitors, the city of Gothenburg aims to create an attractive environment and achieve sustainability (Gothenburg Municipality, 2009a).

Departing from the above, this thesis highlights the impact of densification and how such a process affects peoples' everyday lives and gendered aspects in such an area. This is done in the setting of Gothenburg.

¹ Gender equality refers to a state where rights and opportunities are not affected by gender.

1.1 Aim & research questions

This thesis aims to explore how everyday life strategies are formed in the dense city, and further, to explore if and how the dense city may support gender equality. Through studying everyday life of inhabitants in one area, it is possible to understand the role of densification and how strategies are formed as part of everyday (local) lives. The gender perspective puts focus on how gender aspects are aligned in the dense city. The following research questions will guide the thesis:

- How do women and men form their everyday life strategies in terms of accessibility?
- In what ways are the identified strategies influenced by gender?
- What factors support or hinder the local life – how and why?

In order to fulfil the aim, a qualitative method was undertaken. Time diaries were combined with interviews with inhabitants in a densified area in Gothenburg, that is Kvillebäcken. Since the study took place in 2021, the pandemic of covid-19 was partly included as a contextual factor, and how it affected the everyday.

1.2 Disposition

After this introducing chapter, a literature review is presented in chapter two. Here, I first introduce accessibility by mobility and proximity. Second, I present earlier research illustrating gender differences in terms of mobility. In chapter three, the theoretical approaches that the thesis relies on, are presented. Time-geography in addition to theories of gender contract and gender as seriality are used in order to investigate the everyday lives and gendered aspects. Chapter four introduces the methodological approach, the study area and the methods used to capture the everyday, ending with a reflection of the methods. Chapter five presents the results from the study in three parts: Nearness and everyday (gendered) life strategies, Gender structures in the near city and The near city: the built environment and beyond. These findings are discussed in relation to the literature review and theoretical framework in chapter six, which also includes ideas for future studies, followed by concluding remarks in chapter seven.

2. Literature review

This chapter provides an overview of earlier research on accessibility. First, accessibility is presented, with the focus on mobility and proximity. Aspects of accessibility are important factors when people carry out and perform activities in their everyday lives, as they highlight how people get to places and where activities are performed. Second, earlier research regarding gender differences in mobility patterns is accounted for. Third and last, the two sections are combined to specify the topic that will be addressed in this study.

2.1 Accessibility

2.1.1 Defining accessibility

The concept of accessibility can be defined in several ways, such as the number of available opportunities given a certain time or distance (Hanson, 2004), an ability to reach places, or opportunities to interact (Grengs et al., 2010).

Accessibility can be defined for either places or people, that is; how easily a location is reached or how easily a person can reach a location (Hanson, 2004). However, accessibility is not easily measured as it depends upon several factors. First, the localization of amenities and the individual's home as well as transportation network decide accessibility (ibid.). Second, accessibility is determined by different constraints such as opening hours, the individual's ability and resources, and the need to couple with other individuals (Hägerstrand, 1970) (these constraints are presented in detail in the theory chapter). Third, people have different needs and wants, which also are factors to keep in mind while assessing accessibility (Haugen, 2012). These factors taken together, decide an individual's movements in time and space. In general, high accessibility entails the potential to interact, and the degree of accessibility can be decided through the friction to get to places, which can be measured through time, distance and/or in monetary terms (Qviström, 2015). In addition, regardless of where amenities are localized, some kind of mobility is required in order to reach the amenity, making mobility a crucial part of assessing accessibility (Haugen, 2012; Qviström, 2015). Being subject to low mobility increases the risk for the individual to be socially excluded since low mobility also means low accessibility in a society that is constructed around high mobility (Doi et al., 2008).

Within research, two main ways of achieving accessibility between home and amenities for an individual are highlighted: *accessibility by mobility* or *accessibility by proximity* (Haugen, 2012). According to Gil Solá, Larsson & Vilhelmson (2019) and Haugen (2012), the first entails the individual's ability to reach activities or amenities through bridging distance (e.g., travel), where accessibility is achieved in relation to time, and with fast transport modes. The latter means that activities or amenities are localized in the residential surroundings, where instead a close distance with slow modes of transport decides the accessibility. For individuals to have accessibility, one of these two, mobility or proximity, is necessary. A third aspect of accessibility is virtual accessibility, and its significance is increasing (Gil Solá, Larsson & Vilhelmson, 2019). Haugen (2012) points at that the relationship between mobility and proximity as a continuum, as the boundary between the two is not clear. The same goes for proximity and the opposite, that is distance, as perceptions about near or far may differ between individuals or depend upon the activity/amenity in mind (ibid.). The relationship between mobility or accessibility and the built environment has taken two directions, i.e., an increased mobility can motivate an urban sprawl, or an urban sprawl increases the need of mobility (Hanson, 2004; Hjorthol, 2008). Within research as well as planning, there has been a shift from mobility to proximity in order to promote more sustainable behavioral patterns (cf. Gil Solá, Larsson & Vilhelmson, 2019; Levine, Grengs & Merlin, 2019; The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, 2016). This shift has meant moving from the focus on increasing mobility towards increasing proximity, to make sure that amenities are localized closer to residents within a city.

2.1.2 Mobility, proximity and the built environment

The urban land-use is spatially separated, and in order for urban life to take place, some sort of movement is needed (Hanson, 2004). Thus, accessibility has spatial dimensions, which affects individuals' opportunities to accessibility through either mobility or proximity. Such spatial dimensions are given by the localization of amenities as well as of residential areas (Haugen, 2012). Geurs & van Wee (2004) point out that land-use has a direct as well as an indirect effect on accessibility. The land-use' direct effect on accessibility refers to the spatial distribution of activities and services, the demand for them, the amount and quality. The land-use' indirect effect on accessibility refers to the infrastructure (e.g., transport system). As mentioned above, accessibility differs between people, however, accessibility also differs between different land-uses, such as between rural and urban land-use as well as within and between urban (and rural) settlements (Haugen, 2012).

In order to counteract an urban planning that is mobility-based, that fosters and is fostered by an urban sprawl, increases car dependency and is constructed with divided land-uses, the dense city is advocated (Hanson, 2004; Qviström, 2015). Accessibility should be at the core of land-use decisions in order to create a more sustainable city (Doi et al., 2008; Levine, Grengs & Merlin, 2019). Through emphasizing the dense city, the distance between amenities would decrease, which may lead to a greater usage of transport modes beside the car (Banister, 2008). To be able to achieve (a more) sustainable mobility, Banister (2008) points at different actions needed. One such action regards land-use policy. The argument is that densifying and creating a mixed city, increases the level of proximity which in turn may reduce distances travelled – or encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable transport modes (ibid.).

However, the built environment is not the sole factor that steers individuals to make use of either motorized travel or slow transport modes. Rather, it is an interaction with other factors such as values and identity. This is illustrated by Lagrell, Thulin & Vilhelmson (2018) who investigate the everyday life of families that choose to refrain from the car. The choice to be carless has two motives, i) moral beliefs and convictions such as environmental concerns, and ii) perceiving car ownership as burdensome. The voluntary car-lessness in the everyday is perceived as positive, however, it is sometimes also perceived as constraining to refrain from the car, especially for free-time activities or during weekends or holidays (Lagrell, Thulin & Vilhelmson, 2018). In managing the everyday without the car, strategies such as trip chaining, local opportunities (and thus proximity) and home deliveries were identified.

In a review by Millard-Ball (2021) of Levine, Grengs & Merlin (2019) it is argued that accessibility by proximity alone cannot be assumed to decrease travel made by car. Proximity increases accessibility, but so does speed; both these factors lead to more places being reached. Thus, proximity itself should not be assumed to increase more sustainable transport modes. Further, even if proximity is increased, it is not self-evident that proximity is the deciding factor when choosing where to perform an activity or use a certain service (Haugen, 2012). Also, Qviström (2015) criticizes that a shift from mobility-based to accessibility-based planning (proximity) will lead to a sustainable development. The reason is that there is a limited understanding of the concept of accessibility as static. It is not only the ability to reach a place that decides accessibility, but also the place in itself. If accessibility to the place is

changed, the place itself also changes, and vice versa. This is because a mix of conditions interact with each other: accessibility depends upon not only mobility, but also on boundaries drawn and exclusions as well as on what is present and not present in the place. Thus, accessibility and place must be understood in relation to each other.

Apart from highlighting accessibility in terms of mobility and proximity and the built environment's role, research has also illustrated differences in mobility among social groups, such as gender (Frändberg & Vilhelmson, 2014; Hjorthol, 2008). This is highlighted in the next section.

2.2 Gendered mobilities

The relationship between gender and mobility is reciprocal: mobility informs gender, as well as gender informs mobility (Hanson, 2010). The former means that (im)mobility creates, reinforces, changes meanings and practices of gender. The latter means that power relations, identity formations and perceptions of different mobility aspects form mobility patterns (Hanson, 2010).

Women's and men's travel patterns differ. Women and men travel about the same number of trips however, women's travel involves shorter distances than men's, resulting in less mileage and consequently, less emissions (Hanson, 2010; Hjorthol 2008; Kronsell et al., 2016; Næss, 2008). Thereby women's travel has a lower environmental impact than that of men. Women travel more by slow modes (i.e., public transport, biking or walking) and engage more in travel that is related to non-work, whereas men travel more by car, commute farther and make more trips related to work (Gil Solá, 2013; Hanson, 2010; Næss, 2008). Further, men's travel patterns often involve less stops, whereas women make several stops during their trips, resulting in a more complex travel pattern for women (ibid.). Women's lower degree of mobility also means that their actual space of action is more limited than that of men's (Næss, 2008).

The above illustrates that women's and men's travel behavior differs in a variety of ways such as trip length, time used to travel, the usage of different modes and the number of stops during a trip. This also indicates that women make use of near options in the everyday to a higher degree than do men. Differences in trip length can be explained by men's higher level of

access to the car and driver's license (Gil Solá, 2013; Kronsell et al., 2016). This means that resource wise, women and men have access to different modes. There are, however, other explanatory factors, such as responsibilities towards the household, where women often take a higher responsibility (Gil Solá 2013; Kronsell et al., 2016), and make more trips for others while men make more trips for themselves (Hjorthol, 2008). The differences between women's and men's mobility patterns are strengthened when having children (Gil Solá, 2013).

Additional factors for differences are women's and men's different values in regard to transport modes such as the car, as well as tacit or explicit agreements within the household, that determine who has priority to the car (Gil Solá, 2013). Bergstad et al. (2011) find that men to a higher degree make the connection between usage of the car and affective symbolic values (e.g., status) as well as instrumental independence (e.g., flexibility). There are also further contributing factors to women's and men's different mobility patterns in regard to the work-trip (Gil Solá, 2013): (1) women take a higher responsibility for the household and men more often hold managerial positions, indicating vertical differences and (2) the character of professions as either being male or female, or the location of the workplace, being closer for women, indicating horizontal differences.

These gendered differences in mobility remain when socio-demographic variables, such as income, are taken into account, and they are stable over time (Hanson, 2010; Kronsell et al., 2016). Through national activity-travel data over a period of 30 years, Susilo, Liu & Börjesson (2019) find that even though the differences between women's and men's travel patterns have become more similar over time, there are still differences when accounting for gender. Men (still) drive more and make longer trips than do women, and women's trip chaining has become increasingly complex in comparison to that of men. These demographic differences are in parallel to the findings made by Frändberg and Vilhelmson, (2014) that women are catching up in mobility and men have reduced theirs to some degree. When it comes to age, the younger generation has lower car access (both women and men) on a daily basis than the middle-aged generation, which may, or may not, be a trend breakthrough (Frändberg & Vilhelmson, 2014). Further, women are more prone to act environmentally friendly and to improve sustainability within the transport sector (Kronsell et al., 2016). In order to more fully assess equality in mobility there is a need to understand when these differences constitute a conscious choice or are a constraint (Hansson, 2010). With identified

gender differences in mind, Kronsell et al. (2016) argue that it is necessary to question the dominant male norms and suggest that women can become change agents in order to increase sustainability within the transport sector.

The above illustrates that existing literature focuses on gender and mobility. However, as there has been a shift in focus from mobility towards proximity, this sheds light on the relationship between gender, proximity and mobility.

2.3 Accessibility, gender and the near city

The sections above illustrate the role of the built environment as well as structural and social factors for accessibility and the move towards sustainable travel. Mobility is gendered, and even though such gendered differences seem to decrease over time, differences are still prominent. With the above in mind, more is known regarding mobility and gender, and less is known of what happens with such gendered differences when proximity is increased. When a city (or parts of it) is densified, accessibility by proximity is increased, and people's mobility strategies could be altered. Further, less is known of how densification affects women's and men's mobility strategies and whether or not the dense, mixed city can support gender equality. Previous studies claim that due to structural and social issues, men travel further distances and use the car to a greater extent than women, and women are more prone to act for the environment. Thus, it becomes of interest to investigate what happens when a city is densified with more opportunities in the vicinity, and whether or not men embrace women's mobility patterns, or if the patterns between women and men remain or take new forms.

Only a few studies have touched upon these matters earlier. A study on gendered mobilities and the spatial structure in Denmark shows that gendered differences are larger in the outskirts than in the inner-city (Næss, 2008), indicating that proximity is of value. A quantitative study in California that examines whether the compact city could support gender equality implies that car mileages can be reduced through an increased accessibility, i.e., through the dense, mixed city (Lo & Houston, 2018). Pointing at out-of-home-activities, men still seem to have larger span of activity spaces compared to women, even if an increased accessibility provides flexibility for women.

To create more sustainable cities and encourage a shift from high-speed mobility towards slow modes, densification and thus, increasing accessibility by proximity, are strategies put forward. This solution is primarily framed from an ecological sustainability perspective. However, departing from the gendered mobilities identified above, and what may happen to such gendered issues while proximity is increased, the dense city may also support social sustainability. As the dense city is created, and accessibility by proximity is increased, it becomes of interest to further deepen the knowledge of how such planning strategies affect mobility/accessibility strategies of residents. Issues, such as when such proximity is used or not, and under which circumstances, come in the forefront. In addition, with the gendered differences above in mind, it becomes of interest to explore how such differences may be altered by an increased proximity. Thus, this study takes an interest in how the inhabitants' everyday strategies are formed in the dense city, and to explore if and how the dense city may support gender equality.

3. Theoretical approach

This study relies on three different theories. First, the gender contract and gender as seriality are outlined. The gender contract helps making gender structures visible, which are created and upheld between women and men². Such structures have spatial implications, making the perspective useful in order to study women's and men's everyday life and accessibility strategies. Gender as seriality is a way to nuance how women (and consequently men) are positioned in terms of their actions, rather than applying certain characteristics as female (or male). Second, the time geography perspective is presented, that is used in order to capture everyday life and strategies. This approach is useful in order to identify and analyze individuals' time-space activity patterns, as well as to make opportunities and constraints in individuals' everyday lives visible.

3.1 The gender contract and gender as a seriality

The concept of gender describes how female, or male is constructed through social processes (Eduards, 2002; Hirdman, 1988; 2003). These processes are deeply embedded in society as they have been on-going historically for a long time. Applying a gender perspective makes these processes visible: how people are formed to become men or women (Hirdman, 2003). A gender perspective can be regarded as a tool to see the underlying thoughts, practices, imaginations and habits that evolve around women and men. However, it is not possible to distinguish gender as an isolated phenomenon – it is not only gender that is 'made' through social processes (de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2010). Behind a category that is gender, other social processes also exist e.g., class, ethnicity and sexuality that intersect with the gender category. This is referred to as intersectionality: when looking at gender structures one also has to relate to other structures that take place in parallel and together shape social relations. Dependent upon how these social relations are shaped in these groups of women and men, they are affected differently (de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2010). Gender also matters in relation to space. Ahmed (2006) brings up that bodies move in space: when a body moves, that body claims space, and thus space is negotiated between the bodies moving in it. Ahmed (2006, p11) exemplifies with *"And so when I am at my table, I am also claiming that space, I am becoming a writer by taking up that space"*. In the context of this study, there is not just a body moving in space, but it is a gendered body that moves and claims space.

² This thesis focuses on gender in terms of women and men however, it is acknowledged that other genders exist.

The social processes around gender have led to different notions and practices of how women and men are and should be. Historically, women have become subordinated to men (Duncan, 1995; Hirdman, 1988). This is the basis for Hirdman's theory of a gender contract: there is a gender system that can be identified, which is to be seen as a social order, that is, at the basis for social, economic and political orders. The gender system is based on two logics. First, women and men are held apart through a dichotomy in which everything is categorized into female or male. Second, a hierarchy exists, where men compose the norm and women are subordinated (Duncan, 1995; Hirdman, 1988; 1990).

A contract is formed between women and men, that is filled with thoughts, practices, habits and imaginations of how women and men (should) act and the relationship between the two (Hirdman, 1988; 2003). This contract is at the basis for how women and men act, i.e., it makes women's and men's behavioral patterns visible, at the same time as the contract reinforces ideas of how women and men should be (Hirdman, 1988; 2003). The contract stipulates rights, obligations and responsibilities between women and men and describes this contract as invisible and existing on several scales, i.e., between individuals or on the societal level (Hirdman, 1990). Further, the contract passes from generation to generation; it is a cultural heritage.

The gender contract is formed between women and men in a context (Hirdman, 2003; Duncan, 1995). It is upheld mutually between women and men, but co-exists with other contracts of economic, cultural and political character (Hirdman 1988; 2003). Dependent upon the scale and the context, this contract can be abstract, but it can also become more concrete (Hirdman, 1988). An example of the former is tacit perceptions about gender roles, that is an ideal of how the relations between women and men should be. The latter refers to how gender roles are enacted in practice, for example, how women and men divide tasks or resources between them or how they talk. Through identifying a gender contract, what notions and practices that it contains, Hirdman (2003) argues that it is possible to create conditions for change. Thus, the gender contract creates a theoretical base to acknowledge these notions and practices and the implications of these.

Further, the contract may consist of different ideas as it is formed in a context, at a certain point in time (Duncan, 1995; Hirdman, 2003). Therefore, the contract has taken different

forms and expressions through history (Hirdman, 2003). A gender contract that is formed in a specific situation, creates notions and practices regarding women and men, and even though women are subordinated to men within that contract, they can still act against the specific contract (Duncan, 1995). As the gender contract can take different forms and expressions, it means that the contract can be negotiated (Duncan, 1995; Gil Solá, 2016). This can be exemplified through a historical view – where during the 1930s in Sweden, the identified contract would be ‘the housewife contract’. This contract has later been challenged and changed through a set of transitional phases. For example, Gil Solá (2016) labels three types of gender contracts that are in play for the work commute in Sweden: the traditional household contract, the gender-equal contract and the mixed gender contract. Duncan (1995) also points at how the contract can be helpful to explain geographical differences. As there are different notions and practices of what women and men are and should be in different parts of the world, this explains why different gender contracts are in play.

Dividing women and men into two groups has, however, been criticized. Taking women as one group, certain characteristics are acknowledged and connected to women which normalize those characteristics and thereby gender differences are reinforced (Eduards, 2002; Young, 1994). Intersectionality and context affect an individual’s experiences, but in the everyday language women are still pointed out as a group (Young, 1994). Departing from this, Young (1994) proposes another way of thinking of women as a social group, applying Sartre’s (1976) concept of seriality. Seriality has the potential to nuance the understanding of gender structures of women and men, since seriality instead of groups, refers to collectives. There are distinctions between a collective and a group. A group is formed around objectives, whereas a social collective is formed by individuals who passively are united by an object (Ellegård, 1999; Young, 1994). In everyday life, these collectives are often decided by habits and routines. Even though Young has a focus on understanding women as a social collective, the reasoning about gender as seriality can be applied to men as well.

According to Young, thinking of women as a seriality offers a way to seek attributes that are held by women, without applying those characteristics to a female identity (Listerborn, 2007; Young, 1994). Women are united (although passively) and as women get together, it is not only gender that brings them together. There are also other factors that bring a group of women together, e.g., nationality or class. Women as a seriality then, means that we should think about women as a social series, where women can be thought of as a social collective,

without having common attributes (Young, 1994). This implies that women's actions are rather formed by women's actions historically, which are understood as collectivized habits. Earlier actions of women (and men) generate series, where these series are the result of the interaction between the social and historical context and the individual (Listerborn, 2007). However, series also have physical realities (Listerborn, 1007; Young, 1994). The built environment constitutes an example of a physical reality, that generate and re-produce series of action (Listerborn, 2007). Women act in relation to the physical reality (e.g., the built environment) and collectivized habits, but not because they are women with alleged attributes. These series take different forms in different contexts, and constrain and enable actions, however, they do not determine action (Young, 1994).

Young (1994) illustrates a series using an example from Sartre about waiting for the bus. The people waiting for the bus form a social collective, the bus is the material object that brings these people together and public transportation is the social practice. As each individual wants to go on the specific bus route, this is what unites them. However, each individual waiting for the bus has different goals and may act differently, they do not share histories, experiences or identities (Young, 1994). They may only turn into a group if, for example, the bus does not show up on time, and if the individuals start sharing experiences of earlier bus rides or talking about taking a taxi together. It is not the individuals *per se* that are relevant to this collective since they are interchangeable, however, different series are not to be seen as identical (Listerborn, 2007; Young, 1994). Another example that illustrates how the physical reality constrains action within a series, is going to the bathroom, where there are signs restricting each gender which space to use (Young, 1994).

To conclude for this study, the gender contract is a tacit agreement between women and men of how they are expected to act, and how they act in practice, while gender as seriality means that we should address women's and men's actions through an understanding of a series of action. The two perspectives of the gender contract and gender as seriality have in common that they aim to understand the individual's position in social structures (e.g., gender), and thus, they are two ways of looking at aspects of gender. Context is important, and both theories highlight the historical and social importance for how the individual acts. In addition, both theories highlight spatial consequences (Hirdman, 1990; Young, 1994). Within the context of this study, the contract consists of ideas and actions around accessibility and mobility. For men, this contract has traditionally meant a higher access to the car, longer trip

distances and thus the access to more space than for women. For women, the contract is filled with ideas and actions about slower transport modes, higher responsibilities towards household chores and childcare, but also women's tendency to act more environmentally friendly than men. A contract is negotiated and can therefore change as the conditions or prerequisites in which the contract was formulated change (Gil Solá, 2016). Such negotiations are more likely to happen during societal or household transformations (Gil Solá, 2016). This could include the introduction of ICT-technologies, getting a car or moving. From the perspective of seriality, women's and men's access to mobility resources and mobility habits are understood as a consequence of who has historically made use of these. Thus, gender differences in regard to mobility is rather understood as repetitive patterns, rather than the result of a negotiated contract. With this in mind, it becomes of interest how such a seriality changes (how repetitive patterns are altered) when the physical setting changes. Therefore, it is relevant to look into how the gender contracts and serialities may be subject to change as the spatial context changes (e.g., in the dense city).

One way to make gender structures visible in the everyday, is to make use of the time-geographical approach. Applying the time-geographical approach makes it possible to understand how gender and women's and men's different prerequisites form and put restrictions on everyday mobility.

3.2 Time-geography and everyday life

In this thesis, the time geographical approach has a focus on projects, individual path and constraints. These are central concepts within time-geography that are helpful in order to investigate and understand the mobility in the everyday, and activity patterns.

Time geography is concerned with connections between people, resources, time and space (Ellegård, 2019). As an individual is performing an activity, time and space are coupled between the people that are involved and resources that are acquired for the activity. Further, the performance of activities takes places in interaction with a setting (Dijst, 2019). The activities performed are dependent upon the individual's involvement, but also on the localization of different services and each service's schedule (Ellegård, 2019). Thus, the approach sets the focus on the individual in the physical world, and how individual's make use of resources and handle constraints to perform activities, and further, what activities that

are wanted and wished for (Ellegård, 1999). The activities an individual performs, is part of one's everyday life, putting the focus on a micro level. The accumulated everyday life from several individuals makes it possible to say something about a macro level, as societies are formed by the individuals' everyday lives (ibid.).

People set up goals for things they want to do, or a wished future state (Ellegård, 2019). As such a goal is defined, it may involve several activities and/or more than one person to reach that goal. This is defined as a *project*. In order to reach the goal, and fulfil the project, time, material resources, knowledge and skills are required (Ellegård, 2019). Projects exist and can be defined on different scales. When the goal is set by one individual that performs the activities to reach the goal of the project, they are individual. Projects can also be organizational, if several individuals are involved in the project, where the parties are expected to perform different activities to reach the goal. Further, individual and organizational projects intersect when individuals have projects that are also part of organizational projects (Ellegård, 2019), and people engage in different projects, with different durations (Magnus, 2019). Ellegård (2019) refers to knitting a sweater as an example of a project. Knitting a sweater can have several purposes, such as needing a sweater, or enjoying the time knitting. Further, the sweater is (probably not) completed in one session, but one needs to pause for eating, sleeping, working. Together, the project of knitting a sweater consists of ideas that are immaterial, but also leads to a product (i.e., the sweater), that is material. An example of a project in the everyday can be purchase, which entails different purposes dependent upon *what* is purchased, that can be carried out by different members (individually or together) in a household.

As an individual moves in time and space, the individual forms a *path*, which is a way to illustrate these movements in time and space (Ellegård, 2019; Hägerstrand, 1970). The individual's path can be identified at different scales on a continuum from a life path to a daily path (Hägerstrand, 1970). Thus, as the individual moves and performs activities, the individual forms a path in time-space. Each individual forms their own path as they perform different activities and arrange them in different ways. Looking at individuals' paths, the everyday life is made visible, what activities individuals perform and where. However, the individual's path is also formed by a set of constraints (Hägerstrand, 1970).

As an individual wants to realize different projects, different *constraints* play in (Ellegård, 2019). All individuals have to manage different constraints, and they are divided into capability, coupling and authority constraints (Hägerstrand, 1970). Capability constraints refers to the different possibilities that individuals have in regard to available resources, physical and mental conditions (Ellegård, 2019). Dependent upon these factors, individuals face capability constraints in different ways. Coupling constraints concern how an individual must couple and de-couple with others. This means that to realize a project, the individual needs tools, materials and/or meet other individuals (Ellegård, 2019). Dependent upon the project and the individual's capability constraints, an individual needs to engage with others to different degrees. Coupling constraints then, refers to where, when and for how long the individual has to engage (and disengage) with others in order to realize the project in mind. Authority constraints entail different power relations. These affect the individual's possibilities to realize a project. Power relations can be identified on different scales, e.g., they can be laws and regulations or norms and rules in a society (ibid.). Accordingly, power relations can be enforced by different actors such as the state, workplaces, teachers but also material objects such as signs. By these authority constraints the individual's actions are steered. These three types of constraints are intertwined and interact with each other, and together they form the total set of constraints that the individual encounters (Ellegård, 2019; Hägerstrand, 1970). For example, one's working hours can be identified as an authority constraint, which may be dependent upon the timetable for public transport (to get to and from work), and thus, become intertwined with coupling constraints (Ellegård, 2019). The constraints can interact in several ways, making some easier to notify, others more difficult (Hägerstrand, 1970).

To sum up, the everyday is organized in time and space and is formed and constrained by resources available to an individual, as well as by the physical surroundings. The time-geographical approach makes the everyday life, the usage of time, space and associated constraints visible. The concepts presented above are factors that affect people's needs, wants and wishes when they carry out their everyday lives. Together they form, steer and constrain how people arrange different projects. Changes in one of these factors, may have implications for the arrangement of activities (Magnus, 2019).

3.3 The theoretical approaches together

Applying the theory of time-geography through a gendered lens, makes power relations come to the fore, making the perspective useful for gender studies (Scholten, Friberg & Sandén, 2012). Even if time geography has been criticized for reflecting a hegemonic masculine perspective, and as the individual is seen as a non-gendered body it can be relevant. This because time geography is namely concerned with understanding different contexts which intersect with power structures that are embedded within these (ibid.). Women and men organize and carry out their everyday lives in such contexts, and on different terms. For example, women and men may have access to different resources, and/or have different responsibilities within the household (see chapter two). Such differences have implications: it leads to women and men having different accessibilities in the everyday life (e.g., the car), as well as it means that women and men face different time-spatial restrictions, i.e., activities can be time- or space bound or flexible. As social structures, such as gender, have spatial implications, time geography shows how they play out in practice. Time geography puts a focus on how individuals perform their projects, that are formed by constraints in time-space (capability, coupling, authority). The time-geographical approach does, however, not provide an understanding of underlying negotiations, that form these projects. Here the gender contract and gender as seriality are helpful. The gender contract or gender as seriality, creates a spatial pattern which differs between women and men, due to the different thoughts, practices and perceptions of the contract. Women and men have different available resources, and different responsibilities for the projects that they want to fulfil and actually fulfil. Further, some activities that an individual perform imply connections with other people, forming a group (Ellegård, 1999). Other activities imply connections with others only by coincidence, where the involved are better understood as part of a series (ibid.). Therefore, the concepts of groups and seriality can also be linked to time geography.

The approaches in this chapter constitute a theoretical framework that is used in order to make sense of how everyday activities are performed and gendered in the dense city. The city provides a context in which everyday life is carried out, that can produce different settings that enable or constraint such a life. Further, gender structures are in play, that have spatial realities. Thus, the interest in this thesis lies in how such structures are affected by density.

4. Methodology

In this chapter, the methods used to capture the everyday life of residents in a densified area and their strategies are introduced. First, the approach to research is laid out, including the choice of a qualitative case study, time-diaries and interviews. Here the study area is also described, i.e., the area of Kvillebäcken in Gothenburg. Second, an account for the research strategy with the data collection, participants and analysis of the material, followed by reflections of the methods, are made.

4.1 Research approach

As this study takes an interest in the everyday life and the experiences of the everyday, the study is embedded in a social setting. Knowledge is thus created departing from interactions in this setting. For this reason, it is relevant to refer to critical realism and feminist scholars (Bryman, 2016; McDowell, 2014) as the research approach. Leaning on critical realism, the argument is that in order to make sense of the everyday, one needs to take underlying structures into account (Bryman, 2016). The everyday activities of the participants are constructed and created in relation to the built environment and social structures. Further, leaning on feminist scholars, the production of knowledge is understood as situated and not objectively to be found, but is produced in a social setting, influenced by historical discourses (McDowell, 2014). From this follows the choice to work with a qualitative approach including a case study, diaries, interviews and an interpretative analysis.

The qualitative approach enables to get in-depth and put emphasis on the context (Bryman, 2016), which is important in this matter, since the focus is on how the everyday is changed as the context of the built environment changes (in this case: is densified). Through such a depth, meanings and processes can be understood from the perspective of others (i.e., from the perspective of residents in a dense area) (Herbert, 2010). Such meanings and processes are parts of what structures socio-spatial life (ibid.). Further, it is not only *what* people say that is of importance, but also *how* they say it (Bryman, 2016). Thus, this approach means that interpretation comes at the fore (McDowell, 2010). As this thesis is grounded in a theoretical understanding, but also aims to understand the context through the residents in the area, the approach is abductive (Bryman, 2016). This means that I move between theory and empirics in an iterative process. This insofar that this study is based on a theoretical understanding, and in a later step the empirical result is understood in relation to this understanding.

4.2 Case Study

Spatial context matters in the course of how people act and how their everyday is formed (Herbert, 2010; Latham, 2003). People's actions take place in a context, and in order to understand the underlying processes of their actions within a setting, a qualitative approach enabled to make such processes visible. Thus, a case study was applied and in order to understand these processes within a setting, the area of Kvillebäcken was chosen. The area is centrally located in Gothenburg and poses an example of how the dense city has been planned for. Focusing on a single case enabled a depth in the explorations of the role of the space for the inhabitants' everyday lives (Herbert, 2010).

4.2.1 The study area: Kvillebäcken

Gothenburg poses an example of a city that aims to create a dense city as the city is growing. One area where these goals have been realized is the area of Kvillebäcken. Kvillebäcken is centrally located in Gothenburg, on the island Hisingen (Bellander, 2005). The east of Kvillebäcken (often referred to as 'new Kvillebäcken', see figure 1) has gone through major changes in the built environment in recent years, where ecological and social sustainability have been pointed out as important objectives (Gothenburg Municipality, 2020). The objective was to create an attractive city-like environment, with a mix in function and people through building a neighborhood structure (Gothenburg Municipality, 2009b; Bellander, 2005). The area consists of housing (mainly apartments and condominiums), office spaces, green spaces, restaurants and other services. As the area is located between Backaplan (a shopping center) and Wieselgrensplatsen (a square) that both have large-scale services, the focus has been to create small-scale service in Kvillebäcken (Gothenburg Municipality, 2009b; 2020). Further, emphasis has been put on encouraging more sustainable transport modes: through public transport, walking and biking (Gothenburg Municipality, 2020).

The study area of Kvillebäcken



Figure 1: The location of Kvillebäcken in Gothenburg.

4.3 Data collection

In order to capture women's and men's everyday life strategies, time diaries were used in combination with semi-structured interviews. These methods are commonly combined (Dowling, Lloyd & Suchet-Pearson, 2016; Magnus, 2019; McDowell, 2010). As the everyday life is connected to behavioral patterns, time diaries were chosen (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015). The time diaries were conducted prior to the interviews partly as the diaries helped structure the interviews but also posed a concrete example of their everyday to talk about during the interviews. During the interviews, the participants were thus able to elaborate departing from their diaries (Latham, 2003). The interviews allowed a deepened understanding of the participants' everyday lives and how and why the local life was supported or not (cf. Bryman, 2016; McDowell, 2010). Further, the diaries gave an example of how the participants' everyday was structured and different (de)couplings with others (Ellegård, 2019). Taken the two methods together, this was a way to enrich the material (Dowling, Lloyd & Suchet-Pearson, 2016), where the time-diaries and interviews captured different phenomena: the diaries provided a picture of where and when the participants performed activities and moved in time and space, whereas the interviews allowed for an understanding of how and why.

4.3.1 Sampling

In order to recruit participants to the study, a sampling survey was constructed. The survey was a way to get in contact with people residing in the area, to create an interest for the study and thus, to find participants for the study. Thus, the sampling strategy was purposive (Bryman, 2016). Through the survey, it was possible to find participants strategically, i.e., to get participants who lived in the chosen area of Kvillebäcken, and thus finding participants relevant to the study (ibid.).

The survey consisted of 12 questions regarding their everyday lives and background information (see appendix 1). The questions were constructed with two motives, i) to get background information about the participants to be able to sample, and ii) raising the participants interest in the study. At the end of the survey, a question was posed if they were interested in participating in the study, involving time diaries and a digital interview. Before the survey was distributed, it was tested on two friends and revised accordingly. The survey was constructed through Google Forms, and distributed through two different Facebook groups called “What’s going on in Kville?”³ with 2100 members and “The network thriving Kville”² with 2400 members. The questionnaire was distributed on the 28th of February, and a reminder was made on the 2nd of March. In total, 141 answers were received, where 43 expressed an interest in participating in the study, whereof 31 provided contact information. The intention was to get participants who resided in Kvillebäcken, however, in the survey, the geographical boundaries for the area were not indicated. This as the main goal was to get in touch with people living in the major area, rather than it being of importance that they all resided within the geographical boundaries as identified by the city.

In the next step, the sampling was made out of the 31 residents who gave their contact information. The sampling from the survey replies was made strategically departing from how long they had been residing in the area, where the initial intention was to achieve a sample that recently had moved to the area. As this was true for ten of those who responded to the survey, these were contacted first. The reason for this choice was the idea to capture how the everyday had changed after the move to the dense city area. However, only six of them having lived there less than three years accepted to participate in the study, and thus,

³ The Swedish names for the groups are “Vad händer i Kville?” and “Nätverket Levande Kville”.

additional four who had lived in the area for a longer time period were contacted. In total ten participants took part in the study, and they are presented in section 4.3.3.

4.3.2 Time diaries

In the next step, time diaries were conducted with the sample. Each participant was asked to fill out certain events at a point in time (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015). In this case, solicited diaries were conducted with the sample. Through time diaries, it was possible to describe and analyze the individual's everyday life and behavior (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015; Ellegård, 2019), which provided a context for each participant. The participant recorded what was happening as it was happening (or in close connection to it happening) (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015). Time diaries as a method is closely connected to the theory of time geography (Magnus, 2019), and therefore connected time with space from the participants' perspective, and put the activities that they performed, in a social setting (ibid.).

The participants were asked to fill out what activities they performed, where and with whom throughout their day (an example of the time diary template can be seen in table 1 below). Through such a structure, different (de)couplings between people and activities as well as between people and resources were made visible (Ellegård, 2019). The diary template was sent out to the participants through e-mail. They were encouraged to fill out the form for 3 days, however, they were told that 1 to 2 days was sufficient. The participants themselves could choose to fill it out on weekdays and/or weekends dependent upon what was the most convenient for them.

There are some strengths of this method worth mentioning. First, the diaries were filled out by the participants themselves; they recorded what they were doing, using their own words, from a template (Ellegård, 1999; 2019). This is connected to the second advantage: the fact that the participants filled out the diary by themselves, this may have minimized an obligation to answer what they thought was the right thing to answer (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015). Third, the diaries were filled out within the social context where the participants carried out their everyday lives – excluding the risk that the material became de-contextualized (Meth, 2003). Table 1 illustrates an example of the diary.

Table 1: An extract of one participant's diary.

Time	What are you doing?	Where?	With whom?
14:00	Biking from work	Between work & home	Alone
14:20	Grocery shopping	Local store	Alone
14:30	Visiting library	Library	Alone
15:00	Picking up children	Pre-school	With my children

4.3.3 Semi-structured interviews

In the next step, semi-structured interviews were performed with the participants. Using semi-structured interviews enabled a flexibility when interviewing; even though there was an interview guide to help structure the interview, it was also possible to depart from the prepared structure dependent upon how each interview progressed (Bryman, 2016). This meant that the interview could follow a different order than intended and made it possible to ask additional questions based on what the participant replied (ibid.).

As mentioned above, the diary gave a picture of each participant's everyday life, and the interview allowed for an additional understanding of how, why and when the participants performed different activities. Thus, the diary supported the interview, as the diary provided an example of their everyday to ask questions around, and as a basis for their everyday. An interview guide was constructed consisting of four themes: the move to Kvillebäcken, Projects of everyday life, Proximity (nearness)⁴ and Covid-19 and the everyday/proximity (see appendix 2). In order to capture a gender perspective, the time-geographical concept of project was at the core of the interview guide. Through asking about different overarching projects, it was possible to also ask how the participants and their household made each project feasible. In this way, each interview captured a household contract. In addition, the interview guide also posed questions about the participants' perceptions about the area, and why they moved there, to understand what role proximity played in the decision to move. These two latter questions provided overall reasons about their opinion about nearness. Further, due to the magnitude of the current pandemic covid-19 in 2021, the interviews allowed for a discussion about if and how the pandemic had altered their everyday.

⁴ When performing the study, proximity was translated to nearness. Thus, proximity and nearness are used interchangeably.

The interviews were conducted between 14th of March –27th of April. Due to the pandemic, it was not possible to perform the interviews face-to-face, and thus, they were performed through Zoom. The advantage associated with Zoom was that it was convenient compared to having to show up at a certain place (Bryman, 2016). There were, however, disadvantages such as technological issues (ibid.), which was the case during some of the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Swedish, they were recorded and lasted between 45–68 minutes. After each interview, initial notes were taken about how the participant seemed to feel, impression about the interview and at large what aspects that were brought up (cf. Bryman, 2016). Table 2 shows a presentation of the participants and the data collection.

Table 2: Presentation of the participants and data collected.

Participants	
<p>Anna is a student who moved to the area of Kvillebäcken two years ago, from a suburb in the south-west of Gothenburg. She lives with her boyfriend and mainly goes by public transport. Length of diary: 3 days Interview: March 17th, 51 min</p>	<p>Karl moved from another area further out on Hisingen to Kvillebäcken two years ago. He lives with his partner and works for a living. He prefers to bike or walk but have a car in the household. Length of diary: 3 days Interview: March 24th, 45 min</p>
<p>Petra and her husband moved to Kvillebäcken three years ago, as they sold their house when their two children had moved away from home. She is working. They own a car, but she mainly walks or bikes. Length of diary: 2 days Interview: March 18th, 47 min</p>	<p>Robert lives in Kvillebäcken with his partner and two children. They re-located from the central parts of Gothenburg. He is working for a living, and mainly bikes. However, they have a car in the household. Length of diary: 3 days Interview: April 6th, 68 min</p>
<p>Ellen lives with her partner and two children in Kvillebäcken, where they moved eight years ago from an adjacent area further out on Hisingen. Both she and her partner work in the same suburb north-east of Gothenburg, and she mainly goes by car or public transport. Length of diary: 2 days Interview: March 29th, 45 min</p>	<p>Jesper has lived in Kvillebäcken three years ago to where he moved from the suburb in the north-east of Gothenburg. He is single and is working. He mainly goes by bike or public transport. Length of diary: 3 days Interview: March 14th, 49 min</p>
<p>Patricia lives with her partner and three children in Kvillebäcken. Patricia grew up on Hisingen and has relocated within the area of Kvillebäcken a few times. She is currently on parental leave from her work. She mainly goes by bike or public transport. Length of diary: 3 days Interview: March 24th, 66 min</p>	<p>William grew up on Hisingen and has for the larger parts of his life lived in different parts on the island. He and his partner moved to Kvillebäcken 2015, where they live with their child. He is working, and mainly goes by public transport. Length of diary: 2 days Interview: March 17th, 46 min</p>
<p>Malin moved to Kvillebäcken two and a half years ago due to a separation, from the central parts of Gothenburg. She is working, and mainly goes by public transport, although she has a car. Length of diary: 3 days Interview: March 26th, 53 min</p>	<p>Lukas lives in the area with his partner. He moved to Kvillebäcken fourteen years ago from a suburb in the north-east of Gothenburg. He has two part-time jobs. He mainly goes by bike. Length of diary: 1 day Interview: April 27th, 50 min</p>

4.4 Analyzing the material

Even if the diaries were used as an initial step in order to assist the interviews, the interviews were analyzed first, and the diaries constituted a supportive analytical tool. Thus, the analysis of the interviews is presented first.

4.4.1 Analyzing the interviews

After conducting the interviews, they were transcribed in full before the analysis took place. The interviews were analyzed interpretatively (MacKian, 2010). This means that the transcripts were interpreted in relation to the aim and research questions of the study.

The analysis was performed in five steps, inspired by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step was to get to know the data, where the transcripts were read through repeatedly, finding early ideas. The second step was to create initial codes derived from the material. Next, the material was scrutinized through a gender aspect. Here, the transcripts were analyzed separating the material between women and men – and the gender aspect was analyzed in relation to what differed or not. Further, this step involved a scrutinization of what the participants said upfront, but also what they did not say (e.g., their passive words) (cf. MacKian, 2010). The fourth step involved in-depth interpretation of the participants' interview material, supported by the diaries (see 4.4.2). Here codes were identified that were eventually merged into categories. In order to illustrate the findings, the fifth step included a selection of quotes. Since the interviews were carried out in Swedish, they were translated. Table 3 below illustrates an example of the procedure of the analysis, showing emerged categories as well as initial codes and example quotes.

Table 3: Illustration of the analysis.

Quote	Code	Categories
It depends [on] what it is [...] but then for take away in the everyday it's great that there is stuff nearby. So, it depends, in the everyday it's important that its close [to necessities] and good enough - Robert	Amenities near eases the everyday	Usage of the near
He [my husband] can decide right before we make dinner that 'I'm going to the grocery store', and so he takes his backpack and walks to the store and comes home with quite a lot - Petra	Amenities near provides flexibility	
Well, for my partner, only online can supply what he wants, he gets specialized stuff - Patricia	Digital options	Usage of near through digital options
The closest [grocery] store is OK, for being a smaller store, but I like having options [so I mostly make use of other grocery stores] - Jesper	Supply outweighs the near option	Usage of the not-so-near
It varies who drops off and picks up [children], we don't have a routine for that. I can quit early or late [from work], and sometimes my partner works late. So, whoever gets off from work first gets the children – Ellen	Flexibility contract	Types of household contracts
We have a quite strict divide [for household chores] – we take turns with everything - Anna	Equal splitting contract	

4.4.2 Analyzing the time diaries

Apart from the time diaries helping to structure the interviews, they were also analyzed separately. Departing from the analysis of the interviews, examples were searched for in the diaries that could illustrate the analysis and the results.

Commonly, time diaries are visualized using graphs (Ellegård, 2019), which also applied to this case. The graphs visualized the everyday life where focus was put on the geographical context visualizing the individual's path in time-space. This means that each diary illustrated places and movements over one day for one person (ibid.). In addition, distance was visualized in three categories: in the neighborhood, in the adjacent area and further away. In some illustrations, notes were made to indicate activities performed.

4.5 Method reflections

In this study, the choice was to focus on one case, that of Kvillebäcken. By choosing a typical densified environment in Gothenburg, the results of the case can be translated into similar areas (Herbert, 2010). However, it could be a challenge to find a similar area since this is

dependent on the selection criteria that the researcher makes, and no area is identical with another. When interpreting and aggregating the everyday of the participants into social and spatial structures, the researcher also becomes a research instrument (Herbert, 2010). This is a common aspect in qualitative research, with the basis in the way knowledge is achieved. I, as the researcher, was in charge of the research process, I decided the theory, research questions, interview questions and interpreted the answers with my background at hand. Such subjectivity matters: the study is influenced by me as a research instrument. Reliability is, however, strived for through transparency in all phases of the research process (Bryman, 2016). This means that if the study is replicated (using the same methods, theories etc.) the results should overlap to a satisfactory degree.

When it comes to the methods used, i.e., the sample strategy, diaries and interviews, there are a few things to point out. Even though it was possible to strategically choose participants for the study (departing from the sample survey), there is a risk that the participants were all positive towards nearness as a phenomenon. Since the final sample of participants had resided in the area for different time periods, and with different motives to move to the area, such a risk was reduced. The diaries depended upon the participant's motivation and time where there was a risk for a so called 'participant fatigue' meaning that the participant's motivation to fill out the diary could be low (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015). However, as the diaries were conducted prior to the interviews, there was an opportunity to ask clarifying questions related to the day they filled out their diary. Performing the interviews online had its limitations. While it may be easier to make an interview appointment with a participant online, it also limits the benefits of a face-to-face interview, to pay even more attention to the body language and variations in tone modes. Also, material collected through ten participants has limitations to represent all inhabitants in the area, however, the participants mirrored different occupations, ages and backgrounds, even if the area of Kvillebäcken can be argued to have residents with similar socio-economic conditions. Further, when speaking of proximity, it is important to keep in mind that what's near or not may differ between individuals. In order to capture such differences, I asked the participants the question of "what's near" to them during the interviews.

As a final note, this study has referred to women and men in the analysis (while other genders exist). This since the participants categorized themselves as women or men in the sample survey, where they had the possibility to identify themselves in other ways.

5. Results

The results are presented in three parts, where gender aspects are interwoven into each section. In the first part, the presence of (or the insufficiency of) nearness in the everyday life is presented. Three strategies are identified and illustrated. In the second section, the gender aspect is further elaborated, highlighting household contracts and underlying driving forces. The last section shows that the usage of near options is not only a question of localizing amenities near, also the built environment plays a role, and the section ends with the pandemic's effect on usage of the near.

5.1 Nearness and everyday (gendered) life strategies

What is defined as near differs between individuals and can be defined in different ways, such as physical distance or in perceptions of what is near or not. When writing about nearness and proximity in this study, this refers to the local area, i.e., the study area of Kvillebäcken.

5.1.1 The move to Kvillebäcken: experiences of the near

Nearness was pointed out as an important factor in the decision to move to Kvillebäcken. For some of the participants the move to the area was a deliberate choice. Even if the motive to move to Kvillebäcken varied (i.e., nearness to *what* differed among the participants), living in a dense neighborhood was pointed out as something positive. Malin, Karl, Petra and Robert specifically wanted to move to the area of Kvillebäcken. Their motives to relocate to Kvillebäcken were a wish to live in a vivid environment where 'things happen', to live closer to the city, or in an area where everything is within reach. Malin expresses her decision to move to the area in the following way:

When I had seen the apartment, the same night my sister and I decided around 9-9.30 pm to go have a look. And it was... it was in September and it was one of those warm evenings and we parked by the Kvilletorget [square closeby] and headed this way, and the atmosphere was magical, and all I felt was 'This is where I want to live'. People were sitting at cafés with outdoor seating and if I compare with Masthugget [centrally located residential area], where I've always felt at ease, but where it's pretty dead at night, it was just so cozy to be in the center of action – Malin

Other participants moved to the area as a result of other factors. Jesper and Anna ended up moving to the area more by coincidence. Due to a separation, Jesper needed to find a new apartment, and was offered one in the area. As his workplace is in an adjacent area, he figured that the apartment was perfectly located. Anna moved in with her boyfriend, who already

lived in the area. She says that her perception of the area has changed since moving there, in the sense that everything was closer than she thought:

I knew that the communications were good, but I was surprised by how near everything was, beforehand I thought of this area as detached [from other parts of the city] - Anna

Regardless of the motive for moving to the area, nearness was pointed out as a positive aspect of living in the area. Patricia, William, Ellen and Lukas have all been living in the area of Kvillebäcken for some time. Both Patricia and William grew up on Hisingen, and they both have relocated between different areas of Hisingen. Ellen and Lukas initially moved here as they got apartments in the area. However, all four have relocated within the area. Even if they initially ended up here by coincidence, they all express that they liked the area and wanted to continue to live here. William highlights that living in Kvillebäcken makes the everyday life easier, as everything he and his family needs, is close:

Everything is nearby really, and that's perfect [...] it's important to get the life puzzle together with our child – William

This illustrates that for some, the move to the area was a deliberate choice in terms of wanting to live in a place where 'everything' is close. Although others ended up in the area by coincidence, they express a positive attitude when experiencing that much is easily reached from their home. Related to what's near or not, Malin also stresses that what's near is relative:

I think that [what's near] depends on how much [amenities] you have in your neighborhood. To me, where I used to live, I would think that it was close. But with that same distance here, I think is too far – Malin

As mentioned above, when talking about nearness to what, this varies among the participants. Robert points out that nearness to the everyday necessities is important, however, for activities that occur occasionally, nearness is not as important since the trip needed to perform certain activities is easily made:

It's really smooth to do all these things, you can work out, borrow books at the library, get your groceries at [store] and you think 'this is really smooth, that I can do all these things', and that's just because it is close [...] But it depends [on] what it is, I'd rather go further for a charming restaurant, but then for take away in the everyday it's great that there is stuff nearby. So, it depends, in the everyday it's important that its close [to necessities] and good enough, but then it's also nice with a bigger city, and everything is just a tram ride away – Robert

Similar to this, Karl highlights the importance of necessities near for the everyday, but when it comes to the things beyond the ‘basics’, he still thinks that having to go to other stores is not that far:

It’s more important to have something near, to be able to get your basics and stuff you need, because the right supply... Like it is now, this store [close by] doesn’t have everything, but there are still stores close around that do – Karl

Petra highlights that to her and her partner having necessities nearby is important to them both. However, in which sense differs between them. Having amenities near is more important to her partner than to her, while she herself rather highlights the importance of a vivid environment:

Of course, it’s really nice to have the *right* things close by, but foremost it’s important that there’s activity [close], that’s something is going on [...] I would say that to him [my partner] having things near is more important, he definitely wants to live in an apartment in the middle of the city, he’s always wanted that - Petra

In total, nearness was experienced in positive terms, for both women and men. This was true for all of the participants, regardless of motive to settle in the area, regardless of how long they had been residing in the area, and regardless of gender. In addition, Robert’s and Karl’s quotes illustrate that such nearness is especially important in order to make their everyday easier.

5.1.2 Getting to places: modes used in the (near) city

Nine of the participants go by bike, public transport or walk for everyday projects (such as work, leisure or shopping), whereas one participant mainly makes use of a combination of the car and public transport. For four of the participants, the move to a more centrally located area has made them shift towards these transport modes. The remaining five already made use of such transport modes, and thus, the move to the area was a way to maintain an already existing accessibility strategy. All five, however, did express that the move has made it easier to get to places, due to a general distance reduction but also the fact that they live closer to a public transport junction.

Everything is so close here, that you don’t need to [take the tram], and if you’re in a hurry then you bike to town, and if you have time, well then you take the tram - Robert

We have no use for the car in our everyday lives, and its expensive compared to taking the bike, both financially and health-wise - Karl

Often it feels as easy [to go by public transport], not having to park somewhere when it's almost as fast - Malin

Six participants (out of ten) have access to a car in the household. However, for all but one participant it is *not* the main mode used in the everyday. After moving to Kvillebäcken, they express that the car mileage has decreased, due to the nearness to everyday necessities, where it is now often more time consuming to go by car. For the participants this was a conscious desire to make less use of the car. However, the participants also express that the car gives them the freedom of choice/flexibility during weekends and holidays, and to specific activities located in the outskirts of the city, or to be able to do weekly grocery shopping. In this sense, there are activities that the neighborhood does not provide, and thus, the near options are not made use of. Robert provides an example of how the car is used:

We use the car when we, we have a cottage where I grew up, and we take the car there. Sometimes we use the car to do weekly food purchases even though that might not be necessary [...] we don't need a car, but since we had one when we moved here, we've kept it - Robert

The one participant who still uses the car in her everyday, motivates this by being under time pressure as a parent to young children. For her and her household, time savings outcompete nearness:

I mean, if something was really, really close, it would be faster to walk there than to the parking lot, but otherwise, it's the time pressure, as long as it's faster by car [that's what we will do] – Ellen

The remaining four participants, who do not own a car, motivate their choice of being carless as a deliberate choice. Their choice is based on wanting to live in the city without a car, where the participants also connect this to wanting to live in an area that enables a carless life (i.e., having near to necessities and/or with good communications). Car ownership was referred to as burdensome and unnecessary while living in a city, expressed by Jesper in the following way:

I don't want to have a car, it seems expensive, complicated and unnecessary.

Thus, nearness has had an effect on transport mode towards a more sustainable usage through an increased use of the bike and public transport, and a decreased car usage. Here it shows that a gender aspect matters less: the majority of the participants makes use of sustainable transport modes, where it becomes easier to opt out of the car, as a consequence of moving to the near city. When living in a dense city, the results in this study show that gender roles are dissolved in terms of modal choice. For others, living in a near city is a way to maintain or ease their modal choice. As they already made use of transport modes such as the bike, public transport or walking, this indicates that other factors than nearness interfere with modal choice, for example health benefits. Four out of the six participants having access to the car, were also the same participants who explicitly wanted to move to an area providing nearness to different things. Beyond this, nearness does not automatically mean that a shift occurs, as seen in the example with Ellen's household, indicating that nearness in itself, as the sole factor, does not lead to a more sustainable choice of transport mode. Although she did not explicitly express nearness as part of a moving decision, she still highlights an importance of having amenities nearby. However, she does not find that amenities in the area are near enough, and in order for her to shift away from the car, the alternative would need to save more time compared to the car. Ellen is the one case where a shift towards slower modes has not taken place, meaning that she is an exception to the rule that dense areas ease the usage of slower modes, and illustrates that other factors interfere in her modal choice.

5.1.3 Usage of the near and the not-so-near

This section presents usage of the near and the not-so-near for projects performed in the everyday life. First, activities that are fixed in terms of space and time are presented, i.e., work location and schooling. Second, non-fixed projects are presented, i.e., shopping, leisure and social contacts.

Work location. Regardless of whether getting close to work was part of the decision to move to Kvillebäcken or not, a majority of the participants are closer to work after they moved. Even though work location may not be a factor that is easily steered, differences are found between participants in how they view nearness to work. For women, having work close to home is highly valued, and was part of the decision to relocate to Kvillebäcken:

Preferably, I want to work someplace where I can bike, so having work close is important –
Petra

I have 400 meters to work, and that's one reason I even looked for a condominium here -
Malin

For men it's more of a coincidence and is not a decisive factor for where they live. However, Jesper and Karl highlight that it has made the everyday life easier, and as the commute to work has decreased, nearness has become of more and more value:

It's way easier now, I have about an hour a day that I can do something besides sitting on a tram, it's [the work commute] has gone from 40 minutes down to 5, and that's just *so* nice. To the extent where I would find it difficult to find work someplace else that's not in [adjacent area]. But then, you never know when you might have to move for other reasons -
Jesper

I didn't think that it [having work close] was important when I worked in [the outskirts of Gothenburg]. But now, I've moved closer and closer to work, and I've discovered that it's quite nice. Especially with the working hours I have now, I feel that I save a lot of time -
Karl

The above illustrates that having work within or close to the residential area, eases the everyday for both women and men. This was despite women's and men's intentions from the beginning, where women wished to have close to work, whereas men did not have such explicit wishes. However, some participants wanted to have close to work, but not *too* close to work. This was due to the character of certain occupations. An example of this is given by William, who works in an adjacent area, and expresses a wish to not be too close to work:

I'm a [profession], and I've worked on Hisingen before, and it can be awkward to meet [people I encounter in work] all the time when you work where you live, so I think it's a benefit to work further away – William

However, Patricia argues that this is rather a 'big-city-phenomenon' and does not seem to be bothered by the risk of bumping into people she is working for. For her, the benefits of nearness outweigh such a disadvantage:

I'd prefer to have it [work] close by, I know I got that question when I was interviewed for this position, that you could run into people you work with or their relatives [...] and I've always felt that this is a big-city-phenomenon to think it's weird to have to run into people, that you're so used to being anonymous, but this is a fact in the everyday life if you live in a smaller city, meeting teachers or other professionals - Patricia

However, not all of the participants have work closer after moving to the area. Ellen and her partner both work in the outskirts of the city, through a deliberate choice not to have work close to their home, in line with the above reasoning for William, that is due to their professions. Also, Patricia's partner commutes to another municipality. She describes this as tiresome, implying that she has to manage much of the everyday projects:

He works in [municipality further away] and he's tired of commuting, and *I* am really tired of him commuting because he doesn't get home until 6 pm – Patricia

The above illustrates that the majority of both women and men value having work close. However, differences are found in terms of priorities, where women favor having work close to a higher degree. The prime reason to move to Kvillebäcken did not put work in the first place, indicating that living close to work is not the most important factor for their relocation decision.

Schooling. In total, four of the participants have children. When it comes to the choice of schools, nearness plays a role when choosing schools in all cases, but with different outcomes. For Robert, a school close by was the deciding factor, but for William and Erika, it was a balance between having pre-school close by, as well as finding a good school for their children:

And [children's school] is, I even see it from our window, and so we reasoned that schools can be – I mean a school could have great teachers, but then they quit, or new pupils start that are messy. So, we reasoned that the only thing we can be sure of is that the school won't move anywhere, it will always be close and that's of value for us - Robert

That [nearness to school] really mattered! There were other pre-schools closer by, but we didn't choose them as we thought this one was way better, but we could definitely not compromise more than this with the distance – William

The selection of pre-schools and schools for children thus seems to be a balance between choosing a good school and that it should be somewhat nearby. Patricia did, however, not choose a school that was close for her children. She argues that essentially, it's important for her that the children's school is close to where they live, but since her oldest child has had special needs, they ended up choosing a school quite far away. This choice then, has remained for her younger child, as they by the time she was to start school, they had established contacts within that school:

I'm thinking, that had my five-year-old been my first child, who is a social chameleon and way more outspoken, we probably would have chosen [school in the area], because it feels like she will survive anything and like it everywhere. And I think that then we would have chosen [school in the area] completely [for all children], but since we have been the more over-protective with my oldest, and since we've established contact over there then [...], so it depends upon which child that has guided your decision, and that child's needs – Patricia

To have school nearby is stressed as an important element in the choice of schools, however, it is not the sole decisive factor. Nearness matters, although it is a more complex issue since many factors interact with each other. For example, the quote by William shows that for him and his partner nearness matters in the sense that it is important for them in order to be able to make other projects, such as work, function. Thus, having a school close by is not enough. Rather it is a set of factors that interact, such as special needs and quality of the school, that steer the choice of school. In some cases, this leads to a renunciation of having a school nearby. Thus, nearness to school is not the main priority. In the interviews, the choice of school is discussed as a household decision, making it difficult to distinguish any gender differences.

Shopping. Shopping includes all kinds of purchases, such as food, clothes and other items. When performing this project, no explicit gender differences were discerned. Nearness to everyday necessities is pointed out to be an important factor, as it provides flexibility and saves time. Robert, Petra and Patricia highlight this:

Even if Backaplan [shopping area close by] isn't really a charming area, I mean it's not, but you can still get your errands done, and then there is Wieselgrensplatsen [square close by] too, so you know, you can get your Greek yoghurt in two minutes and that's worth quite a lot [...] For me, coming from the countryside, where you don't start something [an activity] if you don't have all you need at home. But now, it's so close that you can start boiling the water on the stove, go buy your pasta, and when you get home the water is just ready. That's a luxury - Robert

He [my husband] can decide right before we make dinner that 'I'm going to the grocery store', and so he takes his backpack and walks to the store and comes home with quite a lot - Petra

If I'm in a meeting close by I can just text [partner] 'send me the list and I'll do the grocery shopping on the way home', spontaneously - Patricia

In addition, digital options were pointed out as important for the project of shopping. Seven of the participants to some degree make use of digital options rather than visiting stores close or further away. The main motives to buy online are convenience to shop online, it saves time compared to visiting stores and that online shopping offers a wider and/or more exclusive supply. In addition, the current pandemic is stated as a motive to shop online instead of visiting stores. The extent to which the participants shop online varies, for some, it is the default choice, for others shopping online composes a complement to visiting stores:

Well, for my partner, only online can supply what he wants, he gets specialized stuff. And for me, it's smooth, I get hair dye or something [...] and you can even get a box delivered outside your door, that's just really smooth - Patricia

What else did I put in my diary... I bought shoes! I hadn't bought them online if it weren't for the pandemic, now I knew what to get because I got the exact same shoes that I already had but that were worn out, otherwise I would have gone to the store - Jesper

You save time buying stuff online, because I can't come home after a day [in the mall] saying that I didn't find anything. That's like going to get milk and coming home without. I mean, you only have a certain time [...] and, is it fun? I don't mind shopping, but there is other stuff I'd rather do, like go have a coffee or so - Robert

However, the near alternative or digital options are not always preferred or used. The choice to make use of amenities further away has three motives: getting hold of a specific supply, viewing shopping as an experience, and achieving variety. Malin and Jesper point at the role of supply:

When it comes to food, I alternate between the store nearby and further away [...] when it works, I go to the one here, but since they don't have certain things, I go to the larger ones - Malin

The closest [grocery] store is OK, for being a smaller store, but I like having options [so I mostly make use of other grocery stores] - Jesper

Ellen points at the experience while shopping, where she rather chooses the alternative, instead of closer options:

Sometimes I go to [grocery store further away] just because it's nice [...] We often go to Frölunda torg [shopping mall further away] to shop, and then we don't choose the nearer alternatives because Backaplan and Nordstan [closer shopping malls] are truly boring and it's not fun to be there and, well, we have a car so it's easy, it's nicer to be there [Frölunda] - Ellen

Another reason to use what's not-so-near is getting variety. Anna as well as Robert talks about feelings of confinement or wanting to get variation in where they go, or that going to the near alternative, does not count as going out:

I like running my errands elsewhere. I like the concept of going away, running errands, and *then* going home - Anna

I think it's just to alternate, see some new streets [...] if we were to go to out for dinner for example, it's like 'what, are we only going to walk 50 meters?', that's not even going out – Robert

Thus, the relationship between shopping and usage of the near is not straight forward. Making use of amenities that are localized near is important for the everyday since it offers flexibility and saves time. However, amenities near are not always enough. Reasons to make use of the not-so-near are that it does not offer enough supply, competitive pricing, or sought-after variety. In addition, many participants make use of digital options when it comes to shopping.

Leisure. When it comes to leisure and the role that nearness plays, it varies. Leisure activities provide a very mixed picture, since the activities performed by the participants differ.

Regarding the general aspect of nearness for leisure activities, the studied area is pointed out to increase flexibility, as the area offers services and activities in the neighborhood, but also that it's easy to access activities located elsewhere. Jesper's quote below is a typical example:

It [living in the area] is an overall improvement, and less travel time. If we dis-regard covid, and take going to the movies or a party, it's ten minutes away instead of thirty, and that enables me to be more spontaneous - Jesper

For leisure activities that occur on a daily basis, nearness is pointed out as important. For example, having near options to work out was pointed out in positive wordings, as nearness makes it feasible, and this is regardless of gender. For Robert it was having the 'right' gym close by that was important, to Anna it was a question of having a gym close that provides classes, and for Karl it was nearness to work that steered them to choose a gym close to his work location, rather than going to the gym he actually prefers:

We were very glad that [gym chain] was opening a gym here. There are other gym's around, but the closest [in that chain] was too far away, so I'm really glad that they opened up closer – Robert

The closest gym didn't have any classes, so I've chosen the closest option that provides spin classes – Anna

[The gym] is in the same house as my work [...] and that's really because it's close to work, otherwise I would rather go to [another gym] but that's in the wrong direction – Karl

Nearness is also pointed out as important for recreational areas, where many of the participants make use of parks close by in the everyday. This was also true regardless of gender. However, for other leisure activities, nearness does not seem to be as important. Women tend to make more use of near options when it comes to their leisure time than men do. Even if leisure activities that occur often in the everyday do not seem to be gendered (as seen through the examples of working out and using recreational areas), a gender difference seems to prevail for leisure activities that do not occur as often. Three of the men (Karl, William, Jesper) have leisure activities further away, such as having a mechanical hobby workshop, playing in a band or singing in a choir. However, only one woman has a leisure activity that is further away, which is horseback riding. Apart from this, many of the participants spend time in their summer cottages, during weekends and holidays.

In addition, the near alternatives are not always considered as enough. Two main examples are found of this. These concern a lack of variation in amenities related to leisure and cultural activities. These are pointed out by both women and men. The first is especially highlighted by the participants who have resided in the area for a longer time period, where they express that there was a larger variation between services a couple of years ago, than what it is today. The latter is somehow expressed by all of the participants. An example of how this is expressed is given by Lukas:

There's the library, and restaurants, but there's no... stage, no movie theater or anything like that. Maybe I can't expect there to be, but it would be nice if there were, because now I always need to leave Kville in order for me to enjoy culture. You have to go someplace else, and it would be nice if there was something here. That would also enable me to take part of cultural activities more, cause it's easier to do things when they are close – Lukas

Even though the project of leisure provides a mixed picture, nearness seems to play a role at large for the performance of activities that are performed on a regular basis in the everyday

life. However, leisure is also the project where the participants did not point out nearness as a major concern. Further, this illustrates examples of when the local area does not provide enough in terms of activities and/or amenities. While no gender differences are distinguished for the usage of the near in terms of working out, the above illustrates that men make use of options further away to a larger extent than women do when it comes to leisure activities not performed as often.

Social contacts. When it comes to social contacts and the importance of having them near, a gender difference can be identified. All of the women state that nearness to friends and family is of importance to them. For Anna, Patricia and Ellen it's important that family and friends are close (meaning in the same or adjacent areas), where Patricia and Ellen also state that such a nearness was an aspect in the decision to relocate to Kvillebäcken. Petra and Malin rather refer to nearness within the city's boundaries: having friends and family in the city was considered as having them near, and consequently, this was rather considered in terms of living within the city boundaries:

To have access to a social life is priority number one, to easily meet people and having people stopping by easily. Maybe foremost just being able to go outside and the children can find someone to play with, without having to set up play dates – Patricia

It wasn't an obstacle [not having friends in the area] since I feel that I live in the middle of the city anyway - Malin

To men, nearness to social contacts does not seem to matter as much, and nearness to friends and family was not a factor that was weighed in the decision to move. They argue that they meet friends and family in other places anyways, outside of where they live. However, Robert states that having friends or family close was important to him when his kids were younger:

If that [closeness to friends and family] was important, then I should live in a small city, because then everybody's close – Jesper

It depends on how intense life is, when the kids were younger, it mattered - Robert

Thus, the role of social contacts is gendered in relation to nearness. Women value having social contacts in the neighborhood and highlight that such aspects were important for the decision to move, whereas to men such nearness matters less.

5.1.4 Everyday strategies in the near city

The sections above illustrate that having options in the neighborhood eases the everyday life. This is the case for all of the participants, gender aside. The participants express that they make use of amenities in the neighborhood, especially when it comes to grocery shopping and other everyday necessities. However, there are also projects that the participants *choose* to perform elsewhere, and further, projects that they *cannot* perform in the neighborhood. When choosing amenities elsewhere, this is mainly a question of supply and pricing when it comes to shopping. Wanting to get variation, or not wanting to work where you live are other reasons. When it comes to projects that cannot be performed in the area, this is mainly in terms of leisure, e.g., lack of cultural activities in the neighborhood or doing activities together with others that involve specific activities such as horseback riding or singing in a choir. Further, the projects of work, leisure and social contacts show to be gendered, whereas modal choice and shopping illustrate that gender matters less.

Departing from the projects that the participants *want to* and *need to* perform, together with the opportunities and possibilities that the area provides, the participants have formed different everyday strategies, where amenities and/or activities near are used to different extent. When it comes to making use of near alternatives or not, the factors influencing the decision to move to the area come at the core. As illustrated in section 5.1.1 above, there are different reasons for the participants ending up in the area, where it becomes of interest to see whether intentions and strategies correspond or not. For the four of the participants who specifically wanted to move to an area that could provide them with near options in the everyday, their intentions correspond to their strategies. Even though work location is not near for all four of them, and even though they still make use of amenities and/or activities further away, they do make use of services in the neighborhood to a large extent. The other participants ended up in the area as a result of other factors, where some of them have chosen to relocate within the area. For Jesper and Anna, who recently moved to Kvillebäcken, two different strategies can be sorted out. Whilst Jesper now has close to his work and leisure activities, he makes use of digital options to a large extent, i.e., his everyday strategy is near in terms of physical and digital options. Anna's strategy, however, shows less use of near options except for grocery shopping and working out. Apart from these two activities, she rather chooses alternatives outside the area. She explains that she enjoys the feeling of going away for activities, and then return home, and that it is limiting to *only* be in the neighborhood. The remaining four participants have lived in or around the area for a longer

time period, meaning that also the area has changed during this time. For all four, nearness is pointed out as important in order to make the everyday life projects feasible, even though this was not an initial motive to move to the area. This shows that the area supports the usage of near options over time.

Taken together, three main strategies can be identified that are used in the everyday: strategy of the near, strategy of the near through digital options, and strategy of the not-so-near.

Examples of these three strategies are illustrated in figure 2-4 below drawing on the time diaries and different days from the participants. Figures 2a and b illustrate strategy of the near.

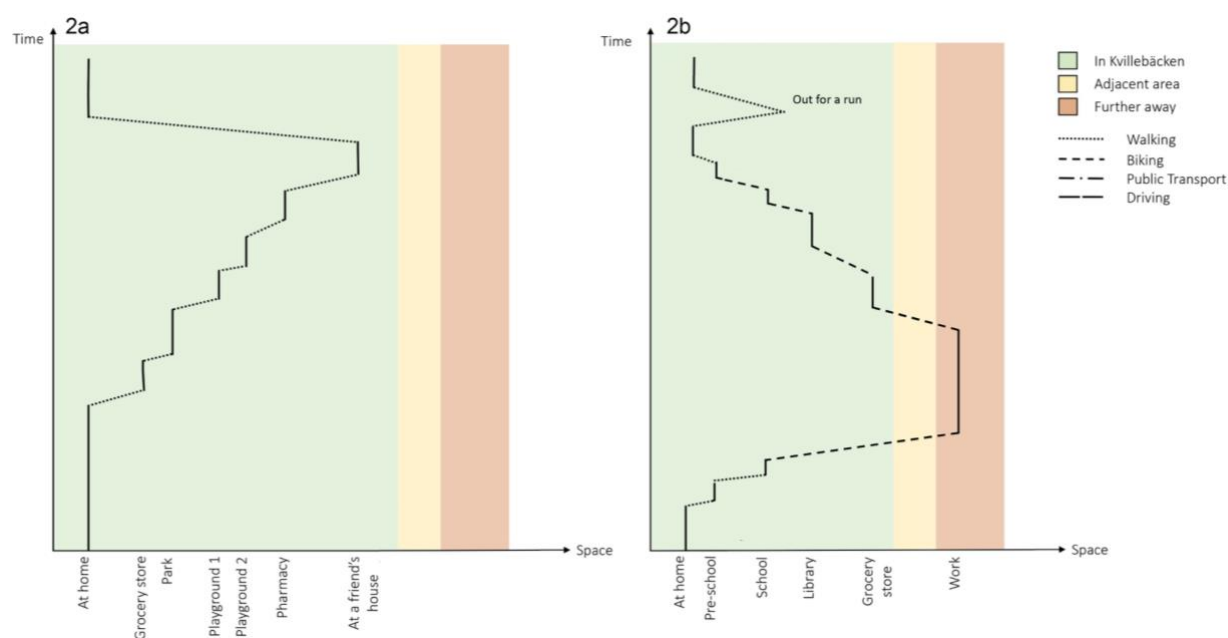


Figure 2a and b: Strategy of the near.

Figure 2a, illustrates one day from Patricia's diary. The figure shows that Patricia makes use of near options in her everyday life. Throughout her day, she walks to different amenities and activities, such as grocery shopping, visits two playgrounds with two of her children, goes to the pharmacy and visits a friend in the neighborhood. Figure 2b shows Robert's day. The figure illustrates that he to a large extent makes use of close options. Although work is further away, both his children's schools are close, and further, he goes grocery shopping and visits the library in the area. The figure also shows that he chooses to bike.

However, the strategy of the near is not always sufficient, where two other strategies are identified: nearness through digital options (see figure 3) and strategy of choosing the not-so-near (see figure 4).

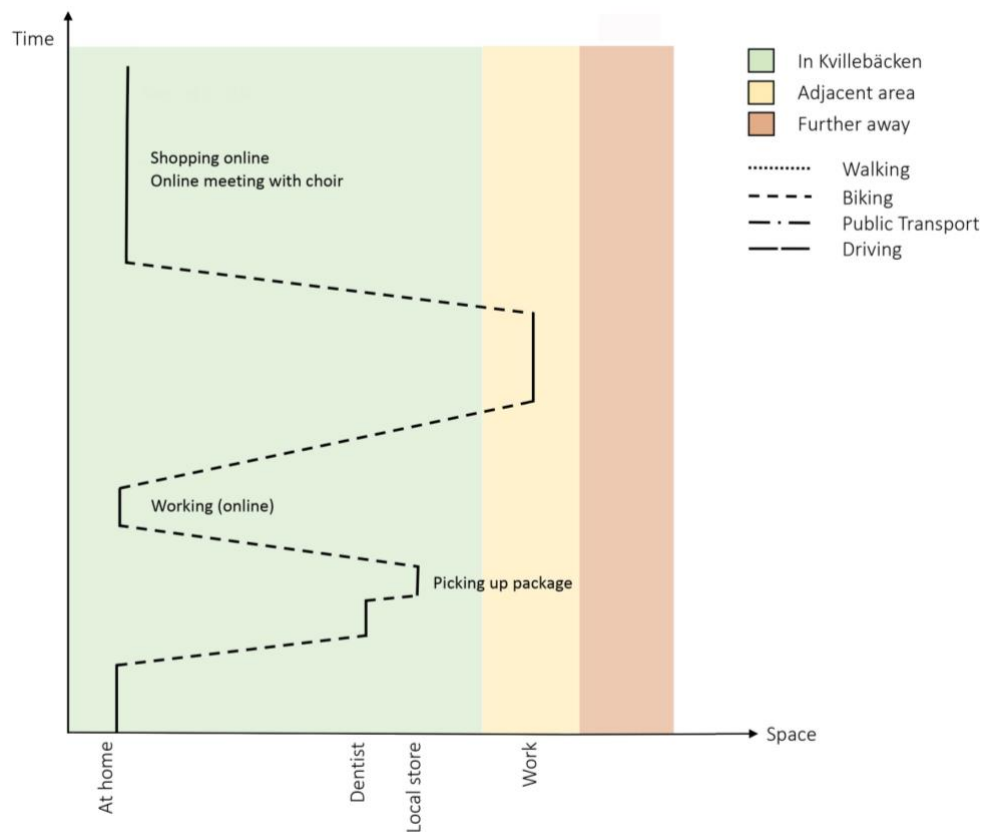


Figure 3: Strategy of the near through digital options.

In figure 3, the strategy of nearness through digital options is visualized. This is a day from Jesper's diary. It shows that Jesper stays in the area, apart from work in an adjacent area. Throughout his day, digital solutions are made use of (see the notes in the figure indicating activities using digital options). Even though work is a fixed activity, the figure illustrates that in this case, work is semi-fixed in the sense that the participant has a choice to work from home. Further, Jesper uses his bike to reach activities or amenities.

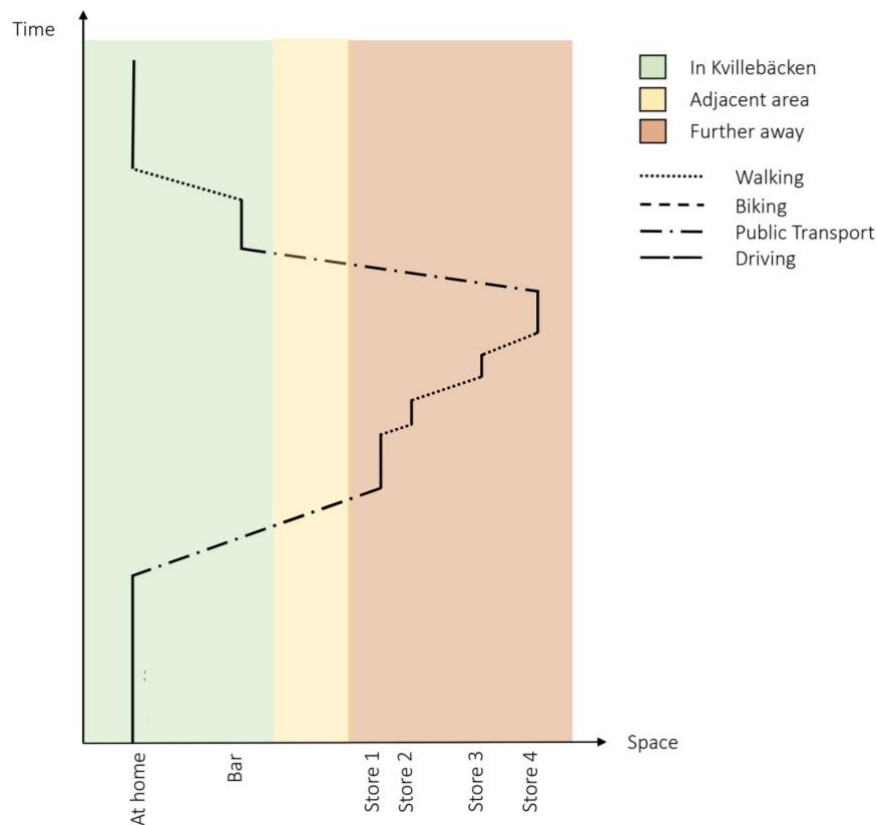


Figure 4: Strategy of the not-so-near.

Figure 4 illustrates a day that composes the strategy of the not-so-near, which is an example of Anna's day. Anna mainly goes by public transport, which also is the case this day. The figure illustrates that Anna chooses to make use of amenities further away. This specific day, she visited four stores outside both the residential area and adjacent area, using public transport. As stated above, Anna prefers to perform activities outside the area.

The figures 2-4 above support the three different strategies that are identified. Even though the participants make use of different everyday strategies, it is important to keep in mind that they also make use of a combination of strategies for different projects, and thus, they form individual strategies in order to perform projects in their everyday.

5.2 Gender in the near city: household contracts and driving forces

5.2.1 Projects in the everyday life and household contracts

Departing from the interviews, different household contracts can be identified in terms of how they manage different projects. All of the participants describe that their division of household

chores is based on an equal division, where it is not something that is discussed to any large extent within the household. The point of departure for their division has from the beginning been to share the responsibility for different chores on equal terms. The household contracts that can be identified in the results are based on two different types where both are perceived as equally splitting chores by the participants. The most common identified household contract regards *flexibility*. Ellen, William, Lukas, Karl and Robert talk about the division of chores being changing day-to-day, dependent upon for example working hours:

It varies who drops off and picks up [children], we don't have a routine for that. I can quit early or late [from work], and sometimes my partner works late. So, whoever gets off from work first gets the children – Ellen

Well now, we want to do for example grocery shopping when there are less people in the stores, so then it's based on who has most energy in the evenings [...] but I'd say that it ends up being a 50/50 divide, and we have a common list that we update continuously – Robert

Another contract that can be identified is based on *equal splitting*, which can either mean splitting specific chores or splitting a chore into every-other-time. For Petra and her partner, such a division is made based upon that she gets bored going to the grocery store, while her husband finds doing laundry boring. However, in social settings, she talks about herself and her husband wanting to change chores now and then, so that others will perceive them as being equal too. For Anna and her partner, they rather make use of a household contract based on splitting chores into every-other-time:

We've always done it like this, since the kids were young. One does the laundry, and the other the grocery shopping, the bigger stuff you know. But I would say the divide has been 90-10 that he's done the grocery shopping and I the laundry, that suits me better. We do change sometimes, but I think that's mainly for show, and we get tired of it after one month and switch back again. It's practical and it works for us – Petra

We have a quite strict divide [for household chores] – we take turns with everything - Anna

The quotes above can be seen as a contract that is based on an equal splitting of chores. However, the quote above also indicates that this division is influenced by societal expectations. This can also be connected to Patricia. Even though Patricia states that the division of household chores is equally distributed, and not discussed a lot between her and her partner, she still seems to take more responsibility in terms of what needs to be done:

I mean, I was a single mom when he [partner] came into the picture and that was a readjustment to start to delegate the responsibility to someone else [laughter], but he was quick to be like ‘I’ll do that, I’ll do the laundry and grocery shopping’ - Patricia

Thus, the above illustrates that the division of household chores is perceived as equally distributed, even if such a division may take different forms (i.e., flexibility or equal splitting). This is explicitly mentioned, however there are also implicit notions on the division of chores in terms of space. This can be exemplified with Petra and Patricia. Since Petra’s partner (mainly) does the grocery shopping, this means that in this case, it is her partner that moves in space. Even though her partner mainly chooses to do the grocery shopping within the area, she also expresses that he sometimes out of an impulse goes grocery shopping with the car further away. This is also true in Patricia’s case. Even though Patricia and her partner share their grocery shopping through flexibility, they do it in different ways (i.e., use different stores). Patricia mainly makes use of the near option in her everyday where her husband does not. She connects this to access to a car – as she does not have a driver’s license, necessities in the neighborhood become more important to her, while her partner instead has the possibility to choose what amenities he makes use of, dependent upon supply:

For me, having something near is more important. My partner can be more like ‘now I’m going to [store further away] because I want *this* thing, and then I might as well get everything there’ and I always say ‘well you don’t have to get everything there just because they have this *one thing*’ [laughter]. He’s more... picky in that sense, like if a store doesn’t have everything that he wants, he goes to another store. But he is also more used to thinking like that because he has access to the car, and he can go anywhere and he thinks that it’s worth the trip if he can get the *right* things, while I think that I can get what I need here [in the neighborhood]. So, having something near is more important to me - Patricia

Thus, both Petra’s and Patricia’s household contracts differ in terms of nearness. While they both choose to stay in the neighborhood (that being either doing laundry at home, or grocery shopping in the area), their partners make the choice to shop near or further away using the car. In these examples, both their partners claim more space, even if this is not an explicit pattern among all men.

5.2.2 Gendered aspects of driving forces

As pointed out in section 5.1.2, a modal shift has occurred for many participants in connection to the move. Even though gender does not seem to matter in regard to modal choices, gender differences can be identified when looking at how the participants talk about their choice of sustainable transport modes, in this case, the bike. First, there are similarities in how they

speak of the bike as a transport mode. Both motivate their choice to bike with feelings of independency, feelings of freedom, being in charge, and the flexibility that the bike provides. Examples are given by Petra and Lukas:

It's just so nice, and I get a feeling that I, that I'm in control. I can get where I want and I'm not a passenger, the bike is a huge freedom not having to wait and not have to plan or think about the timetable for the bus – Patricia

Above all, it [the bike] is reliable, fast, easy, not depending on anyone else, so the freedom – Lukas

However, two main differences are found between women and men in underlying driving forces. Men talk more in terms of efficiency of the everyday life. Also, men make the connection between the bicycle as a transport mode, and identity. Even if there are multiple motives to use the bicycle, men do not only bike, rather they are *bikers*⁵:

I like to see myself as an efficient person, and so I don't like unnecessary set up times – Lukas

Well, from a time perspective it's [biking] the fastest option, because we have a car and we use the car, but the thing is that it's faster to go by bike, just not having to park saves time. So, it's efficient, cost less, and is good for your health, and it's part of your identity that you bike too - Robert

I see myself as a biker, It's a big interest of mine, and it's really convenient – Karl

Thus, men put identity at the core of modal choices, while women do not make such a connection between modal choices and identity. Another difference found while looking at underlying driving forces is that women highlight environmental concerns to a larger extent than do men. For example, Petra and Patricia express this through modal choices (e.g., not wanting to use the car), but also through shopping habits (e.g., refraining from shopping, or thrifting):

We kept our car, but eventually we hope to phase it out, for the environment but also this idea that one does not have to own everything – Petra

And I go to [thrift store in the area] and I think it's great that another thrift store is opening in the area. I enjoy that, partly for environmental reasons, but also because it's a fun challenge to find what you're looking for - Petra

⁵ Being a biker refers to using the bike, not a motorbike.

I've always felt that if I am to buy things, I want to feel that I'm also doing something good, that my purchases contribute to something [bigger] - Patricia

Environmental concerns are not emphasized by the male participants. Lukas, highlights that environmental concerns *can* be a motive to bike, but that environmental concerns, are not *his* motive to bike:

[Environmental reasons] are not the reason that I bike, but the bicycle is the only sustainable mode really – Lukas

Thus, even though 5.2.2 illustrates that gendered aspects of modal choices matter less in a densified area, there are still differences between women and men to take into account in terms of underlying driving forces.

5.3 The near city: the built environment and beyond

5.3.1 Nearness, location and the built environment

In the interviews, it became evident that the participants' descriptions of the area as near is not only about the area in itself, and the possibilities within the area, but also how the area is connected to other areas. That Kvillebäcken is centrally located in the city was pointed out as a positive factor, making the whole city of Gothenburg accessible. Robert, Karl, Patricia and Malin highlight the Kvillebäcken's accessibility in relation to other areas, i.e., it is easy to reach places outside the area, and consequently, easy for others to reach Kvillebäcken:

The location felt important, I'm not interested in commuting that far in the mornings and... well, I want to be able to get to different places [from my home], so that I don't paint myself into a corner, where I can't for example work at different places – Robert

The location of Kville[bäcken] is great, and for those who live on Hisingen, they always have to pass Kville[bäcken] anyway, so it's convenient [for friends to stop by] – Karl

It's always been easy for friends, who don't live around here, to get here. It's like 'oh, it's the first stop after the bridge' and so it has always felt like an accessible place, and I've always felt that I don't want to live in a place where I'd risk getting isolated or not having friends thinking it's easy to stop by – Patricia

And you get anywhere *so* easy. Here's one of the best junctions, and whenever I am going someplace new, I search [the timetable] from here, where I'm going, and I always feel 'yes!' And then there's a direct connection there *as well* - Malin

Thus, the fact that the area is situated centrally in Gothenburg matter in terms of nearness. Also, the junction, where many busses or trams stop, makes it possible to reach many stations in the city. Not having to transit, makes a destination feel closer. In this regard, no gendered differences were identified.

Another factor that was highlighted in the interviews was that the experiences of the area as near is connected to the physical structure, i.e., the built environment. The participants highlight that the built environment can create barriers, where localizations of amenities are not considered close due to such barriers. Examples of such barriers are car roads that are described as difficult to cross, but also that having a lot of traffic running through makes it not as nice to make use of amenities in the area. Also, in the way that the buildings are placed and built are pointed out as barriers. This is pointed out by women as well as by men:

It's always a hazzle to get to the other side of the tram, because of the roads and all those traffic lights etcetera – Patricia

Also, it's difficult to go inside the area, to the courtyards, they built it in a way so that the courtyards are so closed [...] And where the shops and services are, it's just so much traffic, that I don't want to be there. I mean, there are walking paths, but that's on Gustav Daléngsgatan [big road] and Hjalmarbrantingsgatan [big road], and there's so much traffic there, so it's not fun to go there or stroll around, the traffic is too intense – Lukas

That's what annoys me in the area, I find it difficult to understand the car traffic here, and the houses are placed so tight, you don't really go in between them as it is now. There are some areas with squares if you do go in between, but you don't. You don't go in between unless you have a reason to. And it's not that nice to sit in an outdoor seating when there are that many cars passing – Ellen

There are many amenities, but much around [the amenities] is planned for the car to get there – Jesper

Another aspect of the built environment that came forward during the interviews was the ability to meet and interact with people in the area. Some of the participants address a lack of such areas in the densified parts of Kvillebäcken. Even if you can meet up with friends at cafés or restaurants, Ellen points at a wish to have easy access to more meeting points where you can go and meet others:

Now you can walk from your apartment and meet your friends at a restaurant, but you can't really meet up spontaneously in public spaces. So, it would have been nice if there were more squares... where you could stay more, meet and interact with people - Ellen

The role of the built environment is highlighted in several aspects: 1) Living in an area that is situated close to or linked to other areas through public transport, matters. The area is centrally located, with a public transport junction, creating a feeling of being near to places outside the area of Kvillebäcken. 2) Bigger car roads in the area matter in terms of nearness. Bigger roads constitute barriers, and these have implications for nearness in the sense that amenities on the other side of one of these roads, or close to these roads, are not preferred or used as much. 3) The way in which buildings are placed and built, may encourage or discourage usage of the near. The built environment becomes ‘closed’ or unwelcoming. 4) A lack of public spaces to meet and interact with others. In this sense, nearness is not only a question of distance seen objectively, rather the usage of near amenities is affected by who it is planned and built for (e.g., mobility by car). Nearness is not only a question of physical distances, but also the built environment plays a role in terms of nearness. Nearness and the built environment were factors that were pointed out by both women and men, and thus, no gender differences were identified.

5.3.2 The pandemic’s effect on the usage of the near and the everyday

The interviews also imply that the current pandemic affects the everyday life in terms of nearness. Six of the participants have partly switched to remote work, equally many women as men. Due to an increase in remote work, they express that they spend more time in the neighborhoods. Out of the four participants who do not work from home, three of them also express that they spend more time in the neighborhood as a consequence of the pandemic. For Lukas, however, the pandemic has meant that he has to travel longer since his work conditions changed. The pandemic has steered the participants to live a more local life, for both women and men. However, most of the participants argue that even though they appreciated living in an area with many opportunities in terms of amenities before the pandemic, they now realize how much it is worth:

I spend more time in the neighborhood, I use it more and don’t go to other places that much [...] I think I value it more now too; it feels quite nice to not have to go by public transport that often, and that I have what need and want here - Malin

We’ve gone out more in the area since we both work from home, and to get out of the home. When we were both at work, it was quite nice to come home in the afternoon, but now it’s the other way around – it’s nice to go out [in the neighborhood] - Petra

I've felt like that [that the neighborhood has become more important], I know I put up on Facebook recently, that I'm *so glad* to live here during these times, because I can just go outside the door, and my five-year-old can be entertained, and I can see other people to talk to - Patricia

Well now [during the pandemic] it's like we have a miniature city where we spend our time, and almost like we forget the rest of the city where we used to be [before the pandemic] - Robert

The pandemic has also had an effect on modal choices for some of the participants, or some of the participants' partners. Due to the pandemic, Jesper, Anna, and Karl's partners have shifted more towards using the bike. Although Jesper made use of the bike beforehand, he expresses that he now always takes the bike. Anna still makes use of public transport; however, she highlights that she just bought a bike in order to make a shift towards biking. When asking Karl how the pandemic has affected his and his partner's everyday, he brings up that his partner has made the shift from public transport towards the bike. Only in one case such a modal shift has meant an increased car use when Patricia refers to her partner having chosen to make more use of the car since the pandemic, due to a longer commute. In terms of modal shift, no gender differences are distinguished. Even though one could argue that Patricia's partner is part of a gender structure, that is men commute further to work, in their case the reason is said to be labor market reasons.

The above illustrates that the pandemic has steered the participants to live a more local life, where they also express that living in an area with many opportunities has become of more value to them. It also illustrates that a shift in modal choice has occurred for some, mainly towards the bike (although in one case, towards the car). Both these aspects show no gender differences.

6. Discussion

The findings of chapter five are highlighted and discussed in three sections in the following way: i) accessibility strategies used to cope with the everyday. Here the role of the dense city, projects, and constraints are discussed, ii) the role that gender plays in the near city, and iii) the support of the local life. The chapter ends with suggestions for future research.

6.1 Accessibility strategies in the dense city

With previous literature in mind that argues for a transition from accessibility by mobility towards accessibility by proximity (Banister, 2008; 2011; Gil Solá, Larsson & Vilhelmson, 2019; Hanson, 2004; Qviström, 2015), the results of this study point at a mix of accessibility strategies used in the dense city. Three strategies can be distinguished: accessibility by proximity (strategy of-the near), accessibility by digital options (strategy of nearness through digital options), and accessibility by mobility (strategy of-the-not so near). In short, these strategies apply for all residents, regardless of motive to move to the area, regardless of how long they have been living in the area and apply to both women and men.

6.1.1 Accessibility by proximity: the most prominent strategy in the everyday

The results illustrate that the participants to a large degree make use of accessibility by proximity. Proximity can be said to be of relevance for the participants' decision to move to the area. Even though only four mention proximity to different amenities as part of the decision to move to the area, additional four participants highlight the importance and value of proximity, to such an extent that they find it difficult to relocate to some other place (with fewer opportunities). This is especially highlighted for the participants who argue that they want to be able to perform their everyday projects without the car. In this sense, a main finding is that proximity eases the everyday, in terms of providing flexibility and time savings. The four participants who explicitly wanted to move to an area where proximity was increased, do make use of such proximity to a large extent. As amenities have become closer, and distances have reduced, they choose to make use of these amenities and/or make a shift towards slower modes of transport. The move to the area has enabled them to adapt to increased possibilities (i.e., proximity) and thus, their activity spaces have decreased. This is also true for some of the participants who have resided in the area for a longer time. In this sense the near neighborhood enables the participants to maintain an accessibility strategy by proximity also in the long run.

The strategy of the near is derived from proximity as an accessibility strategy. This is a strategy that is mainly used for activities that occur often, in the everyday. Another aspect is that proximity is not always considered to be enough among the participants who make use of proximity to a high degree. Proximity is combined with other accessibility strategies in the everyday, which is handled through making use of the car or public transport. Dependent upon life situation, such combinations may be true for fixed activities, but foremost, it concerns non-fixed activities. A fixed activity where this is illustrated, is schooling, where different priorities are put against each other, and other factors besides proximity are of higher importance. The results illustrate the importance of having necessities near in order to cope with fundamental projects in the everyday, however, when it comes to activities not performed in the everyday, proximity is less made use of, and further, less in demand. Another important aspect that the results illustrate is that at times, nearness is not desired, and proximity is pointed out as sometimes delimiting the everyday. Some of the participants do not want to have close to work, or want to get variation in amenities and activities, or want to get away from the area. In the dense city, proximity is thus desired by the participants to a high degree, however, this does not automatically mean that amenities located close by are made use of, as there are parallel desires to experience other milieus or make use of amenities further away. Such aspects are not pointed out in earlier research.

6.1.2 Digital options support accessibility by proximity

An aspect of accessibility by proximity that has not been highlighted in earlier research to any large extent (cf. Gil Solá, Larsson & Vilhelmson, 2019), is accessibility by digital options. Many of the participants make use of digital options in their everyday. This is mainly in terms of remote work and online shopping (groceries as well as clothes and other items). To which degree the participants make use of online shopping, differs between them, for some digital options is a strategy that is used often, whereas for others, digital options are made use of more rarely. It is an open question whether digital options refer to nearness or not. On the one hand, the individual making use of digital options is, physically, in the neighborhood. On the other hand, the individual makes a choice not to make use of amenities in the neighborhood, and instead makes use of options through a digital solution. A person orders something online from home, that is either collected in a convenience store close by, or even delivered to the front door. Despite such questions of whether digital options should be seen as being in the near or not, the results show that ICT is an accessibility strategy that is substantial, and

although digital options are not included in the concept of proximity, this study shows that digital options can be viewed as digital proximity. Namely, digital proximity supports the everyday. Digital options expand the local area, as digital options provide another supply as well as offering the residents flexibility.

As an implication from the results, the relationship between ICT and proximity can, however, be further elaborated, showing that digital options are made use of in two ways. Shopping online offers a larger supply. In this regard, digital options *complement* proximity. Shopping online is sometimes preferred as it provides yet more convenience than to make use of amenities in the neighborhood, i.e., provides even more flexibility and time savings. In this sense, digital options instead *substitute* visiting stores physically. This could have implications for amenities in the neighborhood. This suggests that localizing amenities near is not enough in order to support a local life, as there are still other motives that make individuals choose shopping online instead of in physical stores. Digital options may also affect the possibility to provide amenities in the neighborhood in the long run, as it implies that such amenities are not made use of. This indicates that densifying the city does not automatically mean that people will make use of the benefits that the dense city provides in terms of amenities, but that also other factors interfere.

6.1.3 When accessibility by mobility is still needed and wanted

In line with the intentions of densifying cities (Hanson, 2004; Qviström, 2015), the strategy of accessibility by mobility is of less importance to the participants. Almost none of the participants used this accessibility strategy in the everyday. However, there are still cases or times when mobility is used and wanted. One such need for mobility is in terms of fixed activities, that is, dependent upon the participants' work location, they may need to make use of mobility. As stated in the results, work location is a fixed activity, that may not be easily steered. However, the results also illustrate that there are participants who argue that they do not want work to be close, and consequently, despite of reason, they need to rely on mobility strategies to a larger extent.

The results show that the need for and use of the car has decreased after the move to the area, as a consequence of an increase in proximity. This supports sustainability in the sense that people travel shorter distances and make use of slower transport modes (cf. Banister, 2008; 2011). Further, it also means that people make use of smaller activity spaces as they shift to

slower modes, implying a trend break to people who make use of faster transport modes and reaching larger activity spaces (Frändberg & Vilhelmson, 2014; Banister, 2011) while living in the dense city. Even though the participants who owned a car prior to the move, have chosen to keep it, they highlight that the move has made it easier to use other modes beside the car, as well as stressing that driving is more time consuming. In this sense, the structure of the city affects the car usage, where the densified city both eases the use of other modes, as well as it complicates car usage.

The strategy of the not-so-near is derived from mobility, which is used in order to cope with different constraints. Such constraints can be time pressure or when the area does not provide the *certain*, or the *right* amenities or activities. However, it is not solely when the individuals encounter constraints that they turn to this strategy. Rather, this accessibility strategy seems to be of most importance when it comes to leisure, holidays and weekends. Even though the participants' need for, and use of the car has decreased, they still point at benefits with having access to the car. In this sense, a need for mobility is pointed out, mainly in terms of weekends and holidays, confirming the findings of Lagrell, Thulin & Vilhelmson (2019). The results also confirm the relevance of proximity in order to cope with the everyday without the car (Lagrell, Thulin & Vilhelmson, 2019). Even though the results illustrate that almost all participants make use of smaller activity spaces in the everyday, there are thus still occasions when a larger activity space is wished for.

Even if the strategy of the not-so-near plays a smaller role in the dense city, mobility still has its functions and/or benefits. Connecting this to dense cities, the role of mobility decreases when opportunities to amenities increase, however, densifying cities will not eliminate such strategies of mobility. This indicates that there are other factors, proximity aside, that interfere with which amenities people make use of. Further, not everyone makes less use of the car, and proximity alone does not necessarily mean that a shift in modal choice occurs. This is exemplified in the one case of a participant, who still relies on mobility as an accessibility strategy to a large extent. This study illustrates that proximity does not necessarily lead to a shift in modal choice. Rather, it is a combination of factors that interplay and lead to such decisions. As the strategy of the not-so-near also seems to be mainly applied for what is not used in the everyday, it means that densifying cities does not support a more sustainable behavior pattern, other than in the everyday.

6.2 The role of gender in the near

The results of this study give insights to gender roles in the dense city, and whether or not gender contracts are re-negotiated, stay the same, and what happens to serialities. Further, the differences in driving forces between women and men and their implications for sustainability are highlighted.

6.2.1 Re-negotiated gender contracts and disrupted serialities

The results provide examples of some dissolved gendered aspects in the near city, while other aspects take different forms, or remain gendered. This indicates that densifying cities can, in part, alter gender structures, and even support gender equality.

One aspect where gender differences was dissolved is the car use. The car is made less use of while living in a dense city area. Instead, a shift towards slower modes has occurred in the everyday (mainly the bike). In this sense, the car is less of a gendered issue in a city that provides proximity. This is in contrast to earlier research, illustrating men's higher mobility and larger activity spaces (Hanson, 2010; Hjorthol, 2008; Kronsell et al., 2016; Næss, 2008), although it can be seen as confirming Frändberg & Vilhelmson (2014) that men's mobility has reduced. Thus, in the densified city, men's accessibility patterns move closer towards these of women, that is, both men and women make use of proximity and/or the same transport modes. The bike is a sustainable transport mode (and not the car), and the increase in usage of the bike is expressed as an easier way to get to places or faster than other modes since distances travelled are shorter. Thus, this study shows that the dense city indeed encourages a modal shift towards sustainable modes, and further, that the dense city may help breaking up gender differences.

Yet, the results show examples of gender differences that are in line with conventional gender contracts. This is the case for the projects of work, leisure and social contacts. When it comes to the fixed project of work, a gender difference was identified in terms of women prioritizing work location close to home in comparison to men. Even though men also value having work close, this indicates that the strategy of proximity is of more value to women than it is to men. When it comes to non-fixed projects, gender aspects can be discerned for some of these, and not for others. When it comes to shopping, no gender differences are found. For leisure, easy access is pointed out for activities such as working out, for both women and men. However,

for other leisure activities it seems that women tend to make more use of near options in comparison to men. Also, for social contacts, a gender difference is found where the results illustrate that proximity to social contacts is of more importance to women than it is to men.

The identified household contracts of *flexibility* and *equal splitting* can both be seen as part of gender-equal contracts (Duncan, 1995; Gil Solá, 2016), as all of the participants refer to their household division as being equal, although each contract looks different. In these contracts, gender equality is the ideal, coupled with practical implications (cf. Hirdman, 1988). Thus, a shift has apparently taken place, that may have been eased by the move to, or residing in the dense city area. It could also point at already existing underlying values of gender equality and can be based on socio-economic factors, such as income, age and education. Independent of reason, this can be seen as positive and is reinforced by proximity, as proximity is pointed out by the participants as supporting in the sense that it provides flexibility.

Connected to the dense city, the move to a densified area may thus have led to re-negotiated gender contracts (cf. Duncan, 1995; Gil Solá, 2016; Hirdman, 2003), or disrupted serialities (cf. Young, 1994). This is illustrated in the example where men and women both tend to use slower modes of transport, with equal access to resources, and where men do not claim the car. As the car plays a smaller role in the densified city, this means that the contract in terms of mobility is re-negotiated. However, it can also be interpreted as serialities being disrupted, mainly for men who have turned away from the usage of the car, towards slower (and more sustainable) transport modes.

Earlier studies illustrate that women have access to smaller activity spaces (Næss, 2008), and that men still make use of larger activity spaces in the densified city (Lo & Houston, 2018). This study adds to these findings since the results show that the size of space in the densified area is equally large for women and men. The findings partly overlap with earlier conclusions that gender matters less in the inner-city (Næss, 2008), and that the dense city increases flexibility for women (Lo & Houston, 2018). However, this study shows that the latter also increases flexibility for men.

This study illustrates that the dense city can help dissolving gender differences, however, there are still differences that remain. Even though the results illustrate that gender matters less while living in a densified area, the strategy of the near (proximity) seems to be of more

importance to women than to men (e.g., when looking at projects in the everyday such as work location, leisure and social contacts). By extension, the process of densification can have an effect on gender differences in two ways: i) help dissolving gender differences, and ii) the dense city becomes a city more on women's terms. Thus, the process of densification can be seen as supporting environmental as well as social sustainability. Even if some gender differences are being dissolved, others remain, or take different forms, the latter will be presented below.

6.2.2 Framing for sustainability: keeping gender in mind

Another difference that is found in terms of gender, is underlying driving forces. Even though there are driving forces that apply to both women as well as to men, they differ in some respects. Although the results illustrate that both women and men motivate their choices to bike in similar ways in regard to feelings of freedom and independence, flexibility and being in charge, there are driving forces that differ between them. As the male participants who travel by bike, make the connection between the modal choice of the bike and identity, this relates to Bergstad et al. (2011), who find that to men, the car is connected to affective symbolic values, whereas in this study, affective symbolic value is instead related to the bike ("I am a biker"). In this sense, there are elements that are transferred from the car towards the bike in terms of symbolic values. The terms of biking and being a biker can also be seen in relation to body and space (Ahmed, 2006). While an individual, regardless of gendered aspects, claims space through biking, such claims of space can be imagined to differ between women and men. Inherent in the expressions of "to bike" are not the same claims for space as in the expression "I'm a biker". In this regard, men claim space differently than do women. Whether such expressions are conscious or not, it has implications for the usage of space, where men seemingly claim their 'right' to space. Through access to the car, men have claimed and reached more space (Gil Solá, 2013; Hanson, 2010; Hjorthol, 2008; Kronsell et al., 2016; Næss, 2008), where the bike may be a continuation of such a seriality, even though the bike is a more sustainable transport mode.

This study confirms that women have more environmental concerns in their everyday (cf. Kronsell et al., 2016). However, since men also make environmentally friendly choices in terms of modal choices in the dense city, their actions also lead to beneficial wins for the environment, even if they motivate their choice with other reasons. Since women still refer to and pronounce environmental concerns, this still indicates that women reflect upon and take

higher responsibility and more actions for sustainability issues. Environmental issues can be argued to be part of women's identity, although it was not explicitly highlighted in such terms.

The learnings above are important to keep in mind while framing for sustainability. If the goal is to achieve sustainability, it is vital to understand such underlying driving forces, and who acts, or do not act, environmentally friendly, and why. This study illustrates that women and men make use of the city's spaces on more equal terms; however, women and men differ in their intentions. Even though women and men end up behaving the same way and making use of the city on more equal terms, their behavior is given by different intentions. While men rather speak in terms of identity in their modal choice, women highlight environmental issues. Such intentions matter in terms of why people act as they do and maintain such behavior. Through an understanding of underlying intentions, sustainability can be promoted further.

To conclude, even though the everyday life is less of a gendered issue in the dense city, there are still gendered aspects to take into account. This study shows that such gendered differences mainly are of importance in two ways. First, women prioritize proximity and the strategy of the near more than men. Gender differences are found both for fixed and non-fixed projects, such as work and social contacts. Second, women and men express different driving forces behind choices in their everyday lives. It seems that it is such driving forces that differ, rather than activity patterns being gendered. This may be the result of either different underlying values, or that living in the dense neighborhood forms new everyday strategies, and thus, forms new behavior, where some generate new serialities.

6.3 The local life supported

Departing from the results, the local life is partly supported through proximity to amenities. However, there are also factors that hinder the local life, i.e., when the amenities in the near are *not* made use of. The reasons pointed out are variation of amenities in the neighborhood, supply and competitive pricing in stores, a lack of certain activities (mainly cultural) and lastly, factors connected to the built environment. The latter factors concern larger car roads, lack of public meeting spaces, and the creation of 'closed' environments. All these factors become important to keep in mind while planning and creating densified city parts. These are all aspects that are highlighted when the neighborhood does not provide enough, compared to

activities that the participants *want to* perform. In these cases, accessibility is not at the core of land-use decisions (cf. Doi et al., 2008; Geurs & van Wee, 2004; Levine, Grengs & Merlin; 2019) as perceived by the participants. Also, proximity can sometimes be perceived as constraining, as expressed by the participants as a desire to get away from the area. Further, the participants who have resided in the area for a longer period express a change over time where there used to be a larger variation in amenities in the area than there is today.

The results of this study illustrate that nearness (proximity) is important for activities that occur on a daily basis, and apart from that, nearness is not a decisive aspect. For example, being able to find everyday necessities, having access to good communications or living in an area that is vivid are all parts of what is expected by moving to nearness. However, being able to perform all projects in the everyday is not expected as doable in the area, and perhaps not even wished for. This was not openly expressed by the participants, however since proximity to leisure activities was not stated as a priority, it can be argued that such proximity is not part of the decision to move to the dense city. Due to the high variety of leisure activities and the differing characters of them, there is no expectations to have all these realized within the residential area. This would indicate that there are different expectations of being able to fulfil different projects within the residential area.

The pandemic has a bearing on nearness. The pandemic has, in spite of being a tragedy with a negative impact, made visible how the dense city, together with other restrictive measures (due to the pandemic) can promote a shift in modal choice and proximity further. The results illustrate that some have made the shift towards the bike, as well as illustrating that the near is more used and appreciated. Such experiences may be of future use after the pandemic, making parallels to possible future environmental issues and restrictions.

6.4 Limitations and future research

This study has its limitations, and these also constitute opportunities for future research. The study is limited to investigating one residential area in Gothenburg, through ten participants. In order to further map how density effects everyday strategies and whether or not they are gendered, further studies are needed. The results of this study could be used as a basis encompassing qualitative as well as quantitative studies.

The fact that the study area is centrally located within the city of Gothenburg was pointed out in positive wordings, where the localization of the area makes other (adjacent) areas feel close and easily accessible through public transportation. This raises the issue of the area's situatedness and what role accessibility to other areas within the city's boundaries play. Making use of proximity and slower modes is confirmed in this study, however, question remains if such confirmations can be made for densified areas in the outskirts of the city. Thus, this calls for further studies on this issue, in areas with different premises (inner as well as outskirts of cities). Further, the results of the study could be influenced by the process of residential self-selection (Mohktarian & Cao, 2008), that the choice to move to an area enables a certain strategy. Such processes are of value to understand in order to further assess the relationship between the built environment and accessibility (ibid.).

The results of this study show that some gender differences are dissolved while others are not when living in the densified city. The main part of the participants has lived in the area a relative short time (less than three years). This means that some processes that are less gendered (habits and routines such as the propensity to walk or bike, not to drive the car, gender contracts filled with ideas of equality) are already manifested. However, a further interest lies in what happens with such processes over time in regard to gender, when residents have lived in an area for a longer time, and have rooted themselves (cf. Hanson, 2010). Further research can attend to such rootedness and gendered aspects.

There are also findings in this study that are of interest for research in more detail. The results in this study touch upon the connections between identity and claiming space in terms of the bike, and it would be interesting to further develop such connections between identity and space from a gendered point of view. Also, the connection between usage of digital options in areas with different densities can be of future research interest. For example, what factors decide the use of digital options in different residential areas, with different densities?

7. Conclusions

This thesis explored everyday life strategies and gender aspects of such strategies in relation to a dense city area. In order to understand the role of densification, the everyday life of inhabitants in one area, namely Kvillebäcken in Gothenburg was studied. With empirics in form of time diaries and interviews with ten participants residing in the area, the following conclusions are made:

Residents of the densified city form everyday life strategies in terms of accessibility in three different ways. These are strategy of the near, strategy of the not-so-near and strategy of the near through digital options. Although residents make use of a combination of strategies in their everyday, the strategy of the near is the main strategy that is used while living in a densified area. This is true among different groups; those who explicitly wanted to move to ‘nearness’, but also among those who moved to the area for other reasons, as well as people who have resided in the area for a longer time period. Thus, this study concludes that the move to a dense area encourages a shift towards more sustainable accessibility strategies, the move to a dense area eases an already sustainable accessibility strategy, and such accessibility strategies can be maintained over time. This means that proximity supports sustainable accessibility from an ecological point of view, even if near alternatives are not always considered enough, or even wished for. Further, this study has illustrated that digital options are part of proximity.

This study also illustrates that the dense city partly dissolves existing gender differences. The dense city becomes less gendered, and a city more on women’s terms. In this sense, the gender contract has been re-negotiated and serialities have become disrupted. It should be noted that these conclusions refer to one densified area, but they signal trends of increased gender equality. However, there are still gender differences that remain in some respects, and some that take new forms in the dense city. Although some gender differences remain, it is an important conclusion that the dense city does not reinforce any gender differences. This means that the dense city supports gender equality, and by extension, that the dense city supports social sustainability.

Planning for proximity works in some senses, however, in some not. What people choose to make use of, may be a result of the built environment, but it also goes beyond the built

environment. Thus, planning for dense communities is not enough, rather, planning is a continuous process in interaction with residents. In order to support a local life, it is important for planners to acquire knowledge about accessibility from the residents' point of view. In conclusion, even if the dense city does not mean exclusive proximity, or dissolves gender differences completely, it holds a lot of future promise, both from environmental and social perspectives.

8. References

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9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: The sample survey

Vardagslivet i Kvillebäcken

Hej!

Jag heter Louise och jag skriver just nu min masteruppsats i Geografi vid Göteborgs Universitet. Uppsatsen handlar om vardagslivet i staden, där jag fokuserar på Kvillebäcken. Eftersom Kvillebäcken har genomgått en del förändringar de senaste åren i hur området ser ut, antal bostäder mm., är jag intresserad av närheten och hur stor roll den spelar till olika aktiviteter, service och utbud, samt hur vardagen eventuellt förändrats i och med covid-19. Jag riktar mig därför till dig som bor i Kvillebäcken, då din input är värdefull och kan hjälpa till att få en bättre uppfattning kring vad som främjar och begränsar din vardag.

Jag skulle uppskatta om du vill besvara nedanstående enkät. Den består av 12 frågor och tar bara ett par minuter att besvara. Du är såklart helt anonym!

Tack för din medverkan!

/Louise Brundin, student vid Göteborgs Universitet

1. Hur länge har du bott i Kvillebäcken?
 - a. mindre än 1 år
 - b. 1–3 år
 - c. över 3 år
2. Varför flyttade du till Kvillebäcken? (du kan ange flera anledningar)

Nedan listas fyra påståenden, där du svarar på en skala mellan 1-5. 1 står för inte alls, och 5 för stämmer mycket väl.

3. Jag trivs i Kvillebäcken som område
1 2 3 4 5
4. Kvillebäcken har allt i form av aktiviteter och service som jag behöver i min vardag
1 2 3 4 5
5. Det är viktigt för mig att kunna göra saker jag vill och behöver i mitt närområde
1 2 3 4 5
6. Jag väljer oftast att utföra aktiviteter/uträtta ärenden så nära mitt hem som möjligt
1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

7. Utbudet i mitt närområde har blivit viktigare för mig under covid-19 pandemin

8. Vilket är ditt kön?

- a. Kvinna
- b. Man
- c. Annat
- d. Vill inte uppge

9. Vilken är din huvudsakliga sysselsättning?

- a. Yrkesverksam
- b. Studerande
- c. Arbetssökande
- d. Pensionär
- e. Annat: _____

10. Hur ser din boendesituation ut?

- a. Ensamstående utan barn i hushållet
- b. Ensamstående med barn i hushållet
- c. Sammanboende utan barn i hushållet
- d. Sammanboende med barn i hushållet
- e. Annat

11. Hur transporterar du dig oftast i vardagen?

- a. Med bil
- b. Med kollektivtrafik
- c. Med cykel eller till fots
- d. En kombination av ovanstående

12. Kan du tänka dig att ställa upp i en fortsatt studie? Studien handlar om hur din vardag ser ut, dina åsikter om Kvillebäcken och hur vardagen eventuellt förändrats i och med covid-19. Studien innebär att du får fylla i en aktivitetsdagbok (1-3 dagar) samt en intervju. Allt sker förstås digitalt och jag garanterar din anonymitet. Din input är värdefull!

Om du kan tänka dig att ställa upp, lämna din mail eller telefon nedan:

9.2 Appendix 2: Interview guide

Introducera intervjun - anonymitet & inspelning – fråga hur det kändes med dagboken.

Bakgrundsfrågor

- Berätta lite om dig själv:
 - Hur länge har du bott i Kvillebäcken?
 - Hur bor du? Bostad + ensam/tillsammans med någon – vem?
 - Hur gammalt är ditt/dina barn? Går de i skola/dagis?

1. FLYTTEN

- Vad var ditt intryck av Kvillebäcken innan du flyttade dit?
- Hur gick tankarna när du flyttade hit? Ville du till området: varför/inte?
- Om sammanboende: Vad ville din partner & varför?
- Vad gjorde att du flyttade dit?
- Vilken roll spelade närheten till olika saker när du flyttade hit?
 - service (spelade områdets utbud någon roll?)
 - kommunikationer (spelade tankar kring resande någon roll? – förändrades ditt resande när du flyttade hit?)
 - kulturutbud
 - grönområden
 - områdets placering i Göteborg
- Vad gillar du med området? Vad gillar du inte?
- Tycker du att området har den service och det utbud som du vill ha? I vilka avseenden? Saknar du något?
 - kommunikationer
 - service
 - grönområden?
- Har du planer på att flytta (kort/lång sikt)? Varför/inte?

2. PROJEKTEN

- Jag har ju sett dagboken som du har skickat in, men kan du berätta om/redogöra för din vardag - hur ser den ut?
- Är dagen som du fyllt i representativ för din vardag, eller avviker den väldigt mycket?

Sysselsättning (innan och under corona)

- Vad jobbar du med/var jobbar du? Vilka arbetstider? (flexibelt/inte/kväll + distans)
- Hur tar du dig till jobbet? j (kanske utifrån dagboken: jag ser att du fyllt i cykel/kollektivtrafik - hur kommer det sig att du väljer cykeln/kollektivtrafiken? Brukar du resa såhär?)

- Hur har flytten till Kvillebäcken förändrat arbetsdagen/resorna? Var detta medveten strategi/del av varför ni flyttade hit? Underlättats/eller försvårats i och med flytten?
- Vad jobbar din partner med? hur tar hen sig till sin sysselsättning? Har hens arbetsdagar/resande förändrats sedan flytten hit – hur?

Fritid (innan och under corona)

- Vad gör du på fritiden? (t.ex. träning, fritidsintressen, egna, barnens...)
- Var någonstans? (tex i ditt närområde/nära ditt jobb/på andra platser?)
 - o Varför väljer du /inte/ att göra det i ditt närområde?
 - o Hade du kunnat göra det närmare/varför gör du inte det?
- Hur tar du dig till olika aktiviteter?
- Gör du dina aktiviteter tillsammans med någon, vem? Eller själv?
- Hur fritiden förändrats i och med flytten hit?
 - o Vad du gör på fritiden och var?
 - o Har du några nya fritidsmönster sedan flytten?
 - o Har fritiden/fritidsaktiviteter underlättats/försvårats av flytten?
- Hur viktigt är det för dig att olika aktiviteter är nära?
 - o Varför /inte/
- Och din partner – vad den gör och hur den tar sig till sina aktiviteter? Ligger de i närområdet eller var? Har hens aktiviteter förändrats i och med flytt?

Sociala kontakter (innan och under corona)

- Hur ofta träffar du eller har kontakt med vänner och familj?
 - o Hur och var träffas ni?
 - o Hur tar ni er till varandra? (Kan även innefatta digitala lösningar)
- Hur har dina sociala kontakter förändrats i och med flytten?
 - o Hur ofta, var, när du umgås med folk?
 - o Var det en del i flyttbeslutet att t.ex. komma närmare sociala kontakter?
 - o Har sociala kontakter underlättats/försvårats av flytten?
 - o Vilken roll har närheten för dina sociala kontakter?
- Har du kontakt / är det lätt att komma i kontakt med andra i området? Skulle du vilja ha mer kontakt med de i ditt närområde?
- Hur gör din partner? Skiljer sig din partners kontakter från dina – hur?

Omsorg (innan och under corona)

- Hur tar sig ditt/dina barn till dagis/skola? Fritid – tex kompisar?
- Hur fördelar du och din partner hämtning/lämning:
 - o Till dagis/skola
 - o Fritidsaktiviteter
 - o Hur kommer det sig?
- Vilken roll spelade barnens skola och aktiviteter för ert flyttbeslut?
 - o tex närheten?

Inköp

- Var gör du dina inköp till hushållet/dig själv? (Innefattar även digitalt)
 - o Var ligger de butikerna? Tex nära ditt hemområde, eller längre bort?
 - o Hur tar du dig till dem, vilka färdmedel?
 - o Varför väljer du dessa?
 - o Hade du kunnat genomföra dina inköp närmare? Varför gör du /inte/ det?
- Brukar det vara du som står för olika inköp eller din partner, eller hur delar ni upp det?
 - o Varför blir det så?
- Hur har dina inköpsmönster förändrats i och med flytten:
 - o Hur ofta, var och vad som inhandlas?
 - o Har vissa inköp underlättats/försvårats i och med flytten?
- Saknar du några möjligheter i utbudet i ditt närområde?
 - o Vad skulle det betyda att ha det närmare?

Hushållsfördelning

- Hur delar ni upp olika aktiviteter som inköp, hämta/lämna osv i hushållet? Blir det en uppdelning naturligt, eller pratar ni mycket om det hemma? Vad är det som styr vem som gör vad?
- tror du att närheten spelar någon roll för detta, tex underlättar?

3. NÄRHETENS ROLL

- Vad tänker du på när du hör ordet närhet?
 - o När är något nära / långt bort? (tex en butik, kollektivtrafik, aktiviteter)
 - o Är närhet alltid positivt? Är det olika positivt att ha nära till aktiviteter, sysselsättning, vänner osv?
- Skulle du vilja ha en vardag som är mer ”nära”? Tex att inte behöva resa så långt för att göra det du gör i din vardag?
 - o Varför/varför inte?
 - o Vad hindrar en sådan vardag i dagsläget?
 - o Vad skulle främja en sådan vardag?
- Tänker du mycket på utbudet i din närhet? Är det viktigt för dig och hushållet?
 - o Varför/inte?
 - o På vilket sätt?
 - o Är det tex viktigare med ”rätt” utbud/aktivitet även om det innebär längre resa?
- Kvillebäcken är planerad för närhet till olika aktiviteter och service, kommunikationer – att främja ett lokalt liv – tycker du att området är ett bra exempel på det?
 - o På vilka sätt/varför inte?
- Tycker du att Kvillebäcken uppmuntrar till att leva en vardag i det lokala området?
 - o På vilka sätt/varför inte?
 - o Vad saknas/krävs för att det ska uppmuntra till ett lokalt liv?

- Finns det tex några aktiviteter du vill hinna med i din vardag som du inte hinner med idag? (önskesituation – hur ser den ut – tog bort den frågan men detta var underfrågan)
 - Vill du ha vissa saker närmare eller inte – varför?

4. CORONA OCH NÄRHETENS ROLL

- Hur har covid-pandemin påverkat din vardag? (tex jobba hemifrån)
- Och för din partner/barn/?
- Har pandemin ändrat din syn på att ha aktiviteter, service nära dig i din vardag?
/Har utbudet i ditt närområde blivit viktigare för dig under pandemin?
 - Är det något du saknar, värdesätter mer eller mindre? I vilket avseende?
Varför/inte?
 - Tänker du *mer* nu på utbudet i din närhet? Har det blivit viktigare till följd av pandemin?